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CORRESPONDENCE OF  
JOHN SEDGWICK  
MAJOR-GENERAL







CORRESPONDENCE

OF

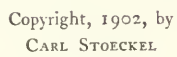
JOHN SEDGWICK

MAJOR-GENERAL

VOLUME I



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THESE VOLUMES ARE  
DEDICATED TO  
MRS. EMILY SEDGWICK WELCH  
THE ONLY SURVIVING SISTER  
OF GENERAL SEDGWICK





## INTRODUCTION



AS the world goes on, and the present time passes into history, a constantly increasing interest attaches to the words and acts of those who have made that history.

Biography is becoming more and more the most fascinating of general reading. More and more we love to mark by a tablet the spots of earth where, by individual effort, a forward step has been taken or a turning-point reached in the life of the nation. More and more we delight to commemorate the birthplaces and the final resting-places of our great men. Within due

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bounds, hero-worship is a generous passion. The desire to learn the details of the lives of our noble dead, what were their likes and dislikes, their favorite and familiar habits,—not their graces only, but even their foibles,—is a craving common to eager natures. It is an honorable instinct as well as a just tribute. Moreover, the letters of our vanished friends are like their living voices—they bring the writers as if from the grave to our minds and hearts.

For these reasons we deeply regret that the records of Major-General John Sedgwick's life are so scanty, but we are proportionately grateful that so much of his correspondence has been saved as appears in these few pages. It adds, also, to the interest of these letters that they were written without the least idea that they might ever reach a somewhat wider circle. With the charm of unpremeditation they have the careless ease which belongs to untrammelled family correspondence. Though adding little to our knowledge of either the Mexican or the Civil War, it is very interesting to observe the writer's personal connection with both. Those military

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movements which, under the leadership of Taylor and Scott, met with such extraordinary success, become vivid when we read his incidental and off-hand account of them, though so fragmentary and incomplete. We thrill with his righteous indignation at such disgraces as the two Bull Runs, and those disheartening failures at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, which he did all that one man could do to prevent. We share his sense of relief in the gracious salvation of Gettysburg, and his renewed anxiety in the desperate struggles of the Wilderness. As we read the letters these feelings come to many of us with a keener sense of reality than at second hand in the historian's narrative.

When the idea of printing the correspondence first suggested itself, the only letters which were known to exist were those written during the Mexican War, about ten years after Sedgwick's graduation from West Point. Even those, modest as they are, are of much interest. Many of us to-day do not like the way in which the quarrel with Mexico was provoked by the United States. It recalls the story of the wolf and the

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lamb. But this, as a matter of national ethics, concerns only the crafty politicians who devised the war in the interest of slavery.

The officers and men who won at Palo Alto and Cerro Gordo were entitled to the same praise with those who fought at Antietam or Spottsylvania. But no more wars, it may be safely and thankfully said, will be waged by Anglo-Saxons on this continent, for generations at least, to promote any cause or extend any area but those of freedom. We are glad that the later correspondence has come to light. While the sense of duty which carried Sedgwick through our earlier strifes was honorable to him, it is satisfactory to have also a personal record of his connection with a war more honorable to the country.

Though the story of these wars has been so often told and retold since these letters were written, they still have the interest that attaches to all the words and acts of a noble actor in both military dramas. In the second series they have the weight which belongs to mature experience and high command.

Sedgwick was a born soldier. Throughout

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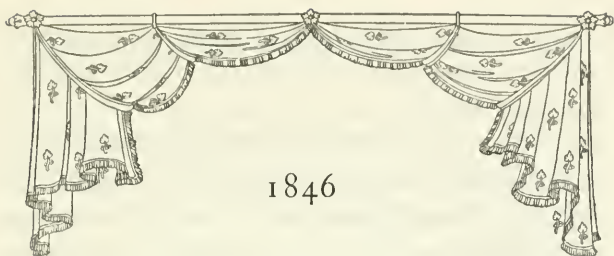
his correspondence we recognize the simplicity, modesty, straightforwardness, and courage which made him, in the hearts of his command, a not less beloved officer than any in the Federal army. In almost every one of these letters we catch also a glimpse of the tenderness of his brave heart. Had he survived the American conflict, it would have been his wish to end his days, like Cincinnatus, on his farm. He would have beaten his sword into a plow-share, and digged in the soil where he now lies.

But it was otherwise ordered. In the "Cornwall Hollow," under the shadow of the Cornwall Hills, rest his honored remains. A noble but simple monument, the tribute partly of loving friends and partly of a grateful country, marks the spot. No soldier has a purer record; few soldiers have a more beautiful resting-place or a more appropriate memorial.

HENRY D. SEDGWICK.







ST. JOSEPHS, TEXAS, July 23, 1846.

My dear sister :

I have a moment to tell you of my safe arrival at this place. We land to-morrow morning and proceed to Matamoras, when I will write the news. We have had a long and tedious passage of forty-five days, with light winds, and generally ahead ; but since last Saturday it has been blowing a gale, and kept us from hearing any news from the shore, so that we have not a word from the world for forty-five days. This will go to New Orleans in this ship, where it will be mailed, and possibly have the luck to reach you. I shall take occasion to write a line by every mail, and hope to receive as many.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

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FORT POLK, POINT ISABEL, July 26, 1846.

My dear sister :

I wrote you a line from the ship that brought us here, with the expectation that it would be mailed at New Orleans, and, I hope, reach you. We sailed from New York on the 13th June, and had a very long passage—forty-five days—but with this exception: quite pleasant, light winds, generally ahead, which did not advance us much, but kept us cool, and verified the old saw, “That it is an ill wind,” etc. On the evening of the 16th we made Grace light,—two thirds of the passage, and at the point that they cross the Gulf Stream to Key West. We were anticipating a speedy trip, but here the wind became dead ahead, and drove us back around the island; and eleven days after we made the same light, in the very track we had previously passed over, and with no more reason to suppose we should succeed better again. This time the Captain concluded to try it across the Bahama Banks. He knew that his ship drew over thirteen feet of water, and that he could not expect to find but thirteen and a half feet, and this for a distance of seventy miles. We had now a fine breeze in the right direction, and before morning found ourselves nearly over, the ship occasionally grat-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

ing along on the bottom, and the Captain fearful of grounding ; but good luck brought us over. We had the same wind for ten days, that brought us in sight of the Brazos (this place), when the wind came out ahead, blowing a gale for three days, moving us off a hundred and fifty miles, which took us three days more to make. After reaching here, we could not land for want of a steamboat to take us off ; and there, during quite a gale, we lay rolling about like a log, all seasick. About the fourteenth day out a man fell overboard, and there appeared little prospect of saving him ; he caught a fish-line that was towing behind, but the vessel was going with such velocity that it drew him under, and he was obliged to let go. Several planks were then thrown him, one of which he caught and sustained himself while a boat could be lowered. By this time he was out of sight, except as he rose on the waves. The Captain thought that it would be impossible to save him, as he was fearful the boat would not hold together ; but after a manful struggle he was brought on board. The Captain then said that this was the sixth man he had had fall overboard, and the first saved, as the sharks generally seize them before they are long in the water. We spoke several vessels, from one of which we learned of the Oregon treaty, which surprised us

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some. Think — we were more than forty days without hearing anything like news, or knowing that there was any such place as we had just left! On our arrival here, and before we landed, we could see the trains leaving the Point for Matamoros with supplies. They were in companies of from one hundred to two hundred and fifty wagons, with six to eight oxen or mules to each, reaching a distance of two miles. Everything here looks warlike. Between seven and eight thousand troops are here, in camps of five hundred and a thousand each. At night the campfires make a brilliant appearance, lighting the whole country for miles around. We landed about dark and without our baggage. After marching to the ground where we were to encamp, we piled our arms, the men made some coffee, when we lay down and slept like old soldiers. The next day we pitched our tents, and are now waiting orders to join the main body, which lies at Camargo, about a hundred and fifty miles up the Rio Grande. There, it is expected, we shall remain for a month or six weeks, and then, if there is no change in our relations with Mexico, to proceed to Monterey, about a hundred and seventy miles further in the interior. Here it is conjectured a last stand will be made, and, if defeated, they can make no further oppo-

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sition. So far I like the country very much ; it is not by any means as hot as I expected to find it. It is perfectly healthy, and I do not fear as much for the climate as I do that I may be kept here for a long time. I did not find a letter here as I had hoped, and I am afraid many will miscarry ; mine will be more likely to reach their destination than yours. If anything happens to me, you will be made acquainted with it immediately ; yet I hope to join you, and that before many months. Till then, believe me that I love you the same as I ever have. Your brother,  
JOHN.

RIO GRANDE, TEXAS, July 31, 1846.

My dear sister :

I intended to have written you again before leaving Point Isabel, but I was ordered to leave at an hour's notice. I am now en route for Camargo, some two hundred miles up the river, with two companies of my regiment and two of the 4th Artillery, numbering about three hundred and sixty men. Yesterday we marched down on the shore of the Gulf, with a delightful sea breeze—but withal very hot. At Camargo, report says, we shall remain for six weeks or two months, when a demonstration is to be made on

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Monterey, an interior city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Rumor says that the enemy are fortifying very strong, but little reliance can be placed on any of their stories. I have received no letter yet, but have heard that there is one for me at Matamoras. If this is so, I shall get it to-morrow. So far I have been agreeably disappointed, both in the soil and climate of this country. It is one of the most luxurious countries in the world. Everything grows without any cultivation. By sticking the seed into the ground, it grows and ripens itself; but the people are too lazy to do even that, and the consequence is that you get nothing except what is self-sown. The country is filled with cattle, sheep, hogs, and horses, worth little but for their hides. Everybody owns as many as he chooses to brand. The cattle are the largest I have ever seen, and the horses the smallest, and perfectly worthless. The people are too lazy to tame their cows, and it is with the utmost difficulty that we can get a drop of milk. This morning a little Mexican was selling milk in the camp at twenty-five cents a quart, and it went very quick at that. You don't know the luxury of having milk till you are deprived of it, or the pleasure of having a table to write on till you are compelled to write on your knees. I have not writ-

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ten to father yet, knowing that you are at home, and that he will most likely see all I have to say. I bid you adieu until I arrive at Camargo.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

REYNOSA, RIO GRANDE, August 8, 1846.

My dear father :

I received your kind letter written while at Saratoga on the 3d of this month, on my way to this place, while passing Matamoras. At the same time I received one from Emily, who informed me of your trip to Saratoga. I cannot but hope from the tone of your letter, and from my own most ardent wishes, that you will find it beneficial, and that you have returned before this, if not well, at least so far improved as to be able to enjoy the blessings with which you are surrounded. My last letter to Emily informed her that I was on my way to join the main body of the army at Camargo, about forty-five miles further up the river. Since then, our destination has been changed, and we have been detained here to garrison this town, much to our chagrin. Our only consolation is, that it is to be temporary, and we shall soon join the army in the field, to share with

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them the honors and hardships. Of the future movements of the army, no one is certain, although every one has his opinion ; and the general one is that, having concentrated at Camargo, it will move upon Monterey and Saltillo and take possession of these towns. The former of these contains about ten thousand inhabitants and is the key of the interior. Here it is thought the Mexicans will make a stand, the result of which will dispose them to continue the war or make peace. This result no one can predict, but here everybody is as sanguine as if it was known. Our privates speak confidently of success, and would defy any Mexican force that could be brought against them. This speaks well, if their confidence in themselves and in their officers is not carried too far. We now hold possession of all the principal towns on the river, and a defeat cannot be more disastrous than it would be in our own country. It looks and appears as little as can be that we are in an enemy's country. This town, of more than two thousand inhabitants, is held by three hundred soldiers. Everything goes on as usual. Persons attend to their own business. Our camp is thronged with country people with milk, eggs, etc., to sell. They say our soldiers treat them much better than their own, that we pay them for everything, while they take everything they want without it.



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In fact, I think we treat them too well, that they will like us so well, they will petition for annexation. This town is only about one hundred miles from the mouth of the river in a direct line, although it is more than three hundred by water. The river has such a current that it is almost impossible for a steamboat to stem it. We were four days in coming that distance. General Thompson says that it is five hundred feet above the sea, but this seems almost impossible, as a steamboat can barely overcome eight inches in a mile. Our Captain, who is from Norwich in Connecticut, and a regular Yankee, said that "it was mighty well that it ran so crooked, for if it did not, a streak of lightning could not go up it." You will hardly believe the ignorance and superstition of the people here. When the matin and vesper bell rings, the people all without exception, no matter what they are doing, prostrate themselves and tell their prayers till the bell stops. A day or two since I saw the funeral of a child. The corpse was placed upon the coffin, so that the head and body were visible to all, and carried on the shoulders of a man through the streets, followed by two others, one playing on a violin, the other on a clarinet, then the mourners chanting a sort of wail. After leaving the church the music played lively marches, waltzes, etc. I asked the reason

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of this, and was told that after the ceremony at the church the child was absolved and received among the blest and their wailing was turned into rejoicing. The principal priest of this town was at the battles, urging the soldiers to exterminate the barbarians of the north. He was drowned in crossing the river at Matamoras on the eve of the 9th of May. It is said that between one thousand and twelve hundred were drowned in that retreat. Everybody here believes it,—Americans that have lived here for years say that there is no doubt of it, and all the reports that we have of the condition of Arista's army, as he retreated, agree that it was totally disorganized and that he could not assemble more than three thousand five hundred men. Yet they may give us a great deal of trouble yet. It is not hotter here than at New York this season. As I am writing, the breeze is blowing freshly, and showers every day, which keep the air cool. Our mails are very irregular; I suppose my letters have a better chance of reaching you, and I will let you know of my whereabouts whenever I have an opportunity of sending. Give my love to all, and believe me to be,

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

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REYNOSA, RIO GRANDE, August 15, 1846.

My dear sister :

I avail myself of a boat waiting to go down to Matamoras to write you again. From there, there is weekly intercourse with New Orleans. I have as yet received but one letter from father and one from you, but I have just heard that there is a mail at Matamoras, and am looking for letters every day. I can hardly realize that I am in an enemy's country, and were it not for the strange and outlandish-looking horses and carts, and, in fact, everything Mexican, I could not persuade myself that I was not in some out-of-the-way frontier town. The houses are all stone, and generally one story high, the roofs flat (cement and stone), the sides projecting about three feet above the roofs, making a sort of promenade on them. But everything looks as if it had been built for centuries, and has the appearance of those old tumble-down ruins that you see in old pictures. The town is situated on a ridge running back from the river, and about a mile from it. In the center is a large square, the streets coming in at the angles. On the sides facing the plaza are the public buildings, stores, and the aristocratic residences. The troops are quartered in the public buildings and

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some private ones hired for the purpose; the officers in tents on the square. My tent is directly opposite the Cathedral, at about two hundred yards' distance. Every morning at sunrise the bell rings for prayers, and you will see all sorts of people hurrying back and forth for about an hour, when it closes, and the same in the evening. On Saturday the bells (there are four) ring for hours—a sort of tune. I asked what it was for; was told that it was to let the people know that the next day was Sunday. People of every grade, when passing the church, remove their hats, and carry them in their hands; and now, as I look out, I see a dozen with their hats off—by the way, this is about the only article of dress they have. Children of all sorts run about with nothing on. The better class dress with some taste, and always neatly; in fact, I have never seen anything filthy in their persons. There are some few Yankees here. Do you remember seeing in some of Sydney Smith's writings this fact, that Yankees were found everywhere?—and after mentioning several instances, he winds up with one: that some English naval officer thought he had discovered a valuable island, and was sailing into an inlet to anchor, when he saw a boat put off from the

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shore and come alongside, and heard in a nasal twang, "Do you want a pilot?" The first person I saw at the mouth of the river has that same twang, and is from Norwich. The first one here is the interpreter and is from New London. There is also a lady here from Connecticut whose husband is from the North. I have not seen her yet. I just asked the interpreter's wife, who is quite a pretty Mexican lady, if she spoke English. She said, "Little, no more." The women all bathe every day; they go down to the river about four o'clock with a large earthen vessel, which they carry on their heads filled with water, take a bath, and bring back their water for the next day. The country here is perfectly healthy. The yellow fever was never known here, and was never known to be at Matamoras more than three or four times, and the farther you get into the interior the healthier it is. I say this because all physicians say that there never was so large a body of men with so little sickness, and this only amongst the most intemperate. I never was in better health in my life, although I have been a little down. I shall probably remain here whilst the army are gone into the interior. It is now at Camargo, and is to move about the first of next month. I have no fear of the result;

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they can't be beaten. Hoping to see you next spring, if not sooner, I am,

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, August 30, 1846.

My dear sister :

I wrote you but two days since, but as the conveyance to Point Isabel was very doubtful, I avail myself of another opportunity to send you a line. I have nothing particularly interesting to write, either about myself or this most uninteresting country. You will perceive that I am still where I was when I wrote you last, with no prospect of leaving — at least, until some new base of operations has been decided on. The army are pushing on into the interior, in different directions, and without meeting the enemy. At one time hopes were entertained of bringing them to an engagement at Monterey, but the latest accounts say that there are few or no troops there. Our troops now occupy all the towns of any size, not only on the river but in the interior, and volunteers are continually flocking in. General Taylor says he has thousands more than he knows what to do with.

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Unless some indications of peace are soon shown by Mexico, impressions seem to be that, garrisoning all the towns we hold now, the regulars and some volunteers will proceed to Vera Cruz by sea, and then to the City of Mexico itself, if possible. I have just spent a few hours with Lieutenant Chase of the 2d, whose letter you have seen, and from him learnt many most interesting anecdotes of the battles of the 8th and 9th. One related to a very intimate friend of mine, Lieutenant Blake of the engineers. He was on the staff of General Taylor. When it was understood that the enemy were in front prepared for battle, he was sent forward to ascertain their position. This he did in the most gallant manner. He went to within four hundred yards of their line, drew a diagram of their position, the position of batteries, their cavalry and the reserve. When returning, he passed near where the battalion of our regiment was stationed, and sung out to them: "Gentlemen, you have got a big army to fight; there are not less than six thousand men." After the battle, as he returned to his tent, in dismounting from his horse one of his pistols fell and shot him. He lived but a few hours, was perfectly sensible, and said, "It was hard to live through such glorious battles and then be killed by such an accident." He

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died regretted by the whole army, and more particularly by General Taylor, who attributes no small share of the success of the day to his bold reconnoissance. Lieutenant Chase said that during the heat of battle, when everybody was very doubtful, he was sent with a message to General Taylor that the enemy were making their way to the rear, evidently to cut off the retreat. He found the General writing, in midst of his staff, with his leg over the pommel of his saddle, the most unconcerned man in the crowd. He delivered his message; the General very calmly told him to "keep a bright lookout for them." On the evening of the 8th a council was held, to see if they should advance, or wait till the expected reinforcement came up. A great majority of the officers were for waiting. At that time Captain Duncan was riding by, and, although not one of the Council, was called by the General and asked his opinion; he answered, "We have whipped them to-day, and we can again to-morrow." The General answered, "That is my opinion, Captain Duncan. Gentlemen, you will prepare your commands to move forward; the Council is dissolved." There probably never were so many personal feats of daring and gallantry performed by so few. I can speak of them without prejudice or vanity,



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

as I was not one of them, but feel excessively proud by being associated with them. You see, I have spun out one of my usual letters with this old story. I have received but three letters from home yet—two from father and one from you. I have been trying to write to Olive, but then I think she is so near you that she will see everything she cares about. Hoping that you will write often, and not forget your brother, I will remain,

Yours,

J. SEDGWICK.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, September 10, 1846.

My dear father :

I avail myself of another opportunity of sending you a word. I am still here at the same place as when I last wrote, with but little prospect of going with the army this campaign ; this I very much regret, but it cannot be helped, and I resign myself with a better grace as it is altogether the pleasantest depot in this country, and I have only to complain of a want of something to do. General Taylor is at this time at or near Monterey, with an advance of six thousand men and a reserve at Camargo of some four or five thousand,—the last volunteers,—and a still further reserve of three thousand at the mouth

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of the river — enough, if properly disciplined, to march to Mexico. There is a great difference of opinion about the prospect of a battle near Saltillo. Many think that they will make a stand there, for the honor of the magnanimous nation; others think they will retire upon our advance; but of this I am sure, if they make a stand, it will be another Palo Alto affair. There never was so fine an American army as General Taylor has with him. It is better organized, has a greater proportion of artillery, and is better equipped, than any army we have ever sent into the field; and no one fears the result with any numbers that the Mexicans can bring against them. The only difficulty is, that they can't be found when wanted. General Ampudia has just issued his proclamation, forbidding all citizens furnishing any articles of produce, horses, mules, or wood for steamboats, under the penalty of being shot; says he has eight thousand soldiers to drive the rebels from the country, and that General Santa Anna is coming with eight thousand more. This is probably more bombast than truth. At all events, in a month we shall see the truth or falsehood of his declarations. We live on very friendly terms here with the citizens; they furnish us everything we want at a reasonable price, the same as our own citizens

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would. The civil authorities exercise all the authority they did before the invasion, and to a spectator no difference can be seen between this and an ordinary garrison. We occasionally have a blow up of a steamboat to add to the other sorrows of war. A few days since a steamboat burst her boiler a few miles from here, killing several instantly and scalding a great many terribly. Seventeen were brought to this place, the most horrible-looking objects I ever saw; they were all without clothes, except shirts. Many were so black and crisp that the skin and flesh came off together; others that the water had taken all the skin off; and then others with broken arms, legs, ribs, etc. Of this number two have died, the others are slowly recovering. The boat was loaded with volunteer troops, portions of different regiments that had been left sick below here. No one can tell the number lost; all agree in saying that the river was full of persons who were knocked or jumped overboard, and that but few could have got ashore. The hands of the boat were most of them lost. Write often, as I hear but little I care about except from home. Emily must n't wait for my letters, but write, write.

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

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REYNOSA, MEXICO, September 19, 1846.

My dear father :

I received your letter of August 29 this morning. You inform me of the receipt of my first three letters, and also of my baggage sent home, etc. I think you will find in one of those letters I acknowledge the receipt of one of your letters ; also, that there is one at Matamoras for me. I have now up to this date received four letters from you, and only two from Emily. I think some of her letters have gone on to Monterey, and I probably shall receive them some time or other. I wrote you by the steamer *New York*, which, you will have learned before this, was lost, near Galveston, with nineteen passengers, all her cargo, etc. I also sent one to Emily by the *Telegraph*, which sailed on the 10th inst. There is some alarm felt for her safety, as she was out in the same gale that the *New York* was lost in.

There will probably have been fought, long before you receive this, a great battle at or near Monterey, the result of which will materially affect us here, as it will decide the fate of the campaign. That the Mexicans are determined to fight there can be no doubt, and that there are assembled a large number of troops (say,

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eight thousand) there can be as little. Our officers write in the greatest spirits, and are confident as to the result, and hail it with the more pleasure as it will very likely lead to overtures of peace. The Mexicans were equally as confident before Palo Alto as we are now, and we may experience as sad a disaster. Before the Mexican army left here on their way to Matamoras they were so confident of victory that they borrowed money, promising to return horses, mules, arms, etc., to be taken from the American army,—some stipulating that the horses should be American. General Taylor has with him between six and seven thousand men, most of them regulars, and a large number of volunteers here, that he can call on if he receives any checks. I trust this will not be the case, as it would, in all likelihood, prolong the war, of which I am heartily tired, unless I can have more of a finger in it. I shall give you the result as soon as possible to learn. The first accounts are always exaggerated, but I shall soon know. I am rejoiced to hear that you are recovering your health, although slowly; and that you may live for many years to be a blessing to your children and friends, is the most earnest prayer of your

Affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

REYNOSA, MEXICO, September 25, 1846.

My dear sister :

I was in hopes by this time to have something interesting to write you, but must disappoint you again. General Taylor is in Monterey, without firing a shot. The enemy, after so many orders of the most bravado kind, have evacuated their largest city this side of the mountain to the mercy of the robbers, as they call us. I did not think, after so much boasting, they would give up without an effort to redeem the trick lost at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma; but so it is, and we are now in possession of every place of any importance (except Saltillo) this side of the mountains that divide this department from Mexico itself; and by this time another division of the army, under General Wool, has possession of Chihuahua, and still another, under General Kearny, of Santa Fé. If there is any truth in the old Spanish proverb that "between two stools, a person is in danger of coming to the ground," Mexico is in a bad fix. We have been prepared here for an attack several days. It was first concerted for the 20th, but they did not get ready, and then fixed yesterday at eleven o'clock, but finally concluded to have a night attack last night, but did not

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make it, although they kept us under arms all night. The people here expected it, as most of them that are able have left town. Others came up last night and placed themselves under our protection. They fear their own soldiers much more than they do our own, and say, if the town is attacked, it will only be for plunder, and instead of molesting us in the square, they will only plunder the outskirts of the town. There are plenty of friendly Mexicans here to warn us in time, and we desire nothing better than the proposed attack. But the same threats have been made towards Camargo, Matamoras, and other places, and this for the purpose of drawing off some of General Taylor's forces; but they will find themselves mistaken, as he has more men than he knows what to do with. I still indulge the hope that the war will be closed this winter, and I shall be ordered north again, but it looks rather doubtful now. I have been in excellent health since I have been here, lost a little of my flesh—this I can afford. I will try and write a short letter by every mail.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

REYNOSA, MEXICO, September 28, 1846.

My dear sister :

I was rather premature in writing you, in my last letter, that the army had taken Monterey, without firing a shot ; but as it was currently reported here, and generally believed, I gave it to you as a fact. It is now, however, in our possession, but after a hard battle of four days' length and very severe loss. We have no particulars yet. General Taylor's aid passed through here yesterday, on his way to Washington, bearer of despatches. He was in such a hurry that he could give us but a few words ; but such as they were, were enough to cheer the heart of every American. He says the first battles were nothing when compared to this. The loss on our part was great. Thirteen officers killed, fourteen wounded, and five hundred killed and wounded of the rank and file. This is not the accurate loss ; it may be more or less. As he left immediately after the battle, he only knew the general result, which is most glorious to our arms. We are waiting most anxiously to hear more, when I will write. I am too anxious now to write more.

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN SEDGWICK.



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

REYNOSA, MEXICO, October 13, 1846.

My dear sister :

I have just returned from a tour up the river to Camargo, having been absent for some days, and on my return found your letter, and up to this time I think I have received all of yours and father's. I saw Lieutenant Myers at Camargo, who told me of his visit at our house. You likewise mention it in your letter. He is on his way to Monterey, to join the army in the field. I did not mention to you in my last (in consequence of the more important news of the battle) that, for some days previous to the battle, we were besieged here by some three or four hundred men, and every moment expecting an attack ; for several nights we were kept on the alert. Several times they approached, with the hopes of surprising us, but finding us on our guard, retreated. Our garrison consisted of one hundred and fifty men, but we were well entrenched, and could easily have driven off some two or three times our number. This attack was no doubt to be in anticipation of the victory to be gained over General Taylor at Monterey. I can give you but few more particulars of this battle than when I last wrote. The battle was very obstinate, and very bloody. Our loss was

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five hundred and sixty-one, killed, wounded, and missing — probably two hundred killed, fourteen officers killed, and one died since of his wounds. I wrote you the number was ten in my last. The Mexican loss was between seven and twelve hundred — the exact number cannot be ascertained. It was a great battle, when the gallantry and obstinate courage of the Anglo-Saxon blood showed itself, overcoming numbers, position, and everything else. On the morning of the 24th the enemy showed a white flag and offered terms of capitulation ; after modification, these were accepted. They were permitted to march out with their small arms, and six pieces of artillery, fifteen rounds of ammunition ; to retire thirty miles towards Saltillo, and not to cross a line drawn to Tampico, and General Taylor not to advance beyond this line. This during a period of sixty days. After the expiration of this time, if negotiations are not going on, each party was left to pursue the war. Since this there has arrived from Washington a special messenger, with instructions, but what they were no one knows. There are various conjectures : some think they are pacific ; others, that they are for pushing the war with vigor, changing the base of operations to Tampico and Vera Cruz. What change this victory will make, if any, no one can tell. I

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

hope they will succeed in negotiating, for I am tired of this country. I long to be luxuriating on ice-creams and mint-juleps in Broadway. I had many particulars of the battle from an eyewitness, a dragoon officer who had nothing to do. He saw my regiment engaged, the first attack that was made, and said that he never expected to see such another sight. They marched up to within musket-range of the trench that had previously been made by the battery, as if they were on drill, and halted for the signal that was to be made (a bomb from a mortar) for the attack. At the signal, they rushed up the trench, and within four minutes all was still. The flag was then hurled down, and the stars and stripes went up. The men went to the ramparts and cheered. This was returned by the dragoons and a Texan regiment that was on a hill that overlooked them. This was the first fort that was taken. There were three others taken by the artillery brigade, without any loss of consequence (only 23 men, I think) — one officer killed and two wounded. In one fort more than one hundred were found dead, out of three hundred garrison. Our loss was almost all in a part of the town where it was intended to make a false attack, but the brigade was pushed on into the streets and cut to pieces. One regiment

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brought out only seventy-nine men, the officers almost all lost. The Mexicans expected to cut the army to pieces; so sure of it were they, that they made arrangements to attack all the towns in turn. But it has proved another Palo Alto to them.

My love to all, and write often to your  
Affectionate brother,

J. S.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, October 23, 1846.

My dear father:

I am about to leave this post, to join the first division of the army at Monterey. There has been no change, since the battle, in the disposition of the enemy. The special messenger of whom I wrote brought the information that Santa Anna had refused to treat till the meeting of Congress which he had called on to meet the 6th of December. It is the general impression here that there will be no more fighting, and that Santa Anna is sincere in his wish for peace, but is afraid to conclude one on his own responsibility. What change the capture of Monterey will make remains to be seen. The battle was not so disastrous as I thought when I wrote to Emily; instead of five hundred and sixty killed,

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

wounded, and missing, there were one hundred and twenty killed and three hundred and sixty wounded, making four hundred and eighty killed and wounded,—disastrous enough, certainly. Of this number seventeen were officers: one for every eight,—a greater number than was ever heard of before. General Ampudia says in his proclamation to the people that he was “out of ammunition and provisions, and that the American army was innumerable—their camp extended nine miles; and that, out of compassion to the citizens, he capitulated.” Now for the truth, as it was told me by a major of the ordnance, who took an inventory of the stores. There were more than eighteen thousand pounds of powder, two hundred and fifty thousand rounds of cartridges, several thousand pounds of lead, and a great many balls,—enough to supply our army a year. Of provision, there was a great number of cattle, and large quantities of corn—the only food they have. And as to numbers, General Ampudia marched out of Monterey with more troops than General Taylor had with him. As to the extent of the camp he was nearer right, as the reserve was encamped some distance off, and was not brought into action. He says also that he killed fifteen thousand; this he has published to the people, and two thirds are ignorant

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enough to believe it. Their national vices are lying and stealing. They will steal everything they can lay their hands on, and lie when the truth will answer better. These vices they almost all have; there are very few exceptions. Colonel Taylor (a brother of the General) told us here that if we had possession of the town, sixty thousand Mexicans could not take it; and that belief is held by every officer and soldier in the army, and such confidence in the soldiers makes them irresistible. There is no way of ascertaining the number of Mexicans killed; from best information that we can get, there are between seven and ten hundred, but General Taylor will not report so high. I need not tell you that I would not like to have this seen by many, as it looks too much like boasting, and I feel myself perhaps too much interested to be unprejudiced. The country is becoming more healthy for the volunteers; they are becoming more acclimated and habituated to take care of themselves. But the loss of life has been terrible; no epidemic ever swept off so great a proportion in New York. In some regiments one in ten have died, and nearly one fourth have been sent home sick. Many have died of homesickness alone. The weather is becoming quite cool, but it makes little difference with the vege-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

tation; they raise two crops of everything a year; they plant from February till August, and are gathering almost every month. You will see planting and gathering in the same field. I presume in ten years this country will be filled with Americans, and then there will be more annexation. California is sure to be ours, but it will all eventually come. I will write again from Camargo; after that you may not hear from me. The communication is not regular beyond Camargo, except for despatches. I still think that the war will be over this winter, and that I shall see the north early next summer; but in this the wish may generate the opinion. I trust, long before this, you have been restored to your usual health; it is more on this account that I desire to be at the north, to be near you if any are sick. Give my love to all, and believe me to be, as ever,

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, November 1, 1846.

My dear sister:

It is now nearly two months since I have had a letter from home, yet I am certain you have written several within that time, and that they



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have miscarried, and more than likely some of mine have shared the same fate. I have endeavored to write home as often as every week, even if I had nothing to write. In my last I wrote that we were daily expecting orders to proceed to Monterey, to join the main division of the army. Since then the orders have arrived, and we are about leaving, probably to-morrow. This has been a great desire within me. Ever since I have been here, I have wanted to see a large army in the field, to become acquainted with the officers, and have some more experience in my profession than can be acquired elsewhere. Not that I expect to reap any glory, except such as will be attached to an association with such gallant fellows as our officers have proved themselves to be. There has been no movement since my last letter, and for fear you did not receive that, I will just mention that General Taylor is still at Monterey, organizing for a forward movement, receiving reinforcements, supplies, etc. The battle was not so disastrous as we had first feared, and from the accounts you will first get in the papers, but sad enough at the best. There were only one hundred and twenty killed and three hundred and sixty wounded, most of them slightly. Many think that twenty-five will cover the deaths of those dying of their wounds.



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If we estimate the victory, as the English do, by the number of the killed and wounded, we cannot call it a great one ; but if we estimate by the results and look at the disparity of numbers and their entrenchments, it is one of the greatest victories of the age. There were many incidents during the fight, but interesting only to those acquainted with the actors. One was told by a Lieutenant of my regiment, who was an aid there. General Taylor had advanced with his staff too far into the city, and the balls were falling very thick around him. He was thumping at a door which was fastened by the persons inside. The Lieutenant suggested he had better cross over the street, where he would be under shelter. The General looked, and seeing a soldier passing, said to him, "Bring me an axe. I'll see if these Mexican devils won't open the door when I order them." An axe was brought. The General took it and said, "Now if you don't open it, I will break it down." The door was opened, and they found it a large rich store, and what was of still more importance to them, a large table set out with refreshments ready for use. These, no doubt, were intended for a very different purpose, but which were diverted by the chances of war. Nobody talks of peace now, the general opinion being that the

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war will last for months. I hope not. I had indulged the hope of seeing you all next spring, and trust I may not be disappointed. The weather here is still warm. Vegetation is not suspended at any time. We have corn ripe, green, and just coming out of the ground, and so with all vegetables. Plenty of large ripe oranges, figs, limes and other fruits, but no apples. The nights are cool and delicious, the atmosphere at all times clear and pure, and but little sickness among the regular troops. The volunteers have suffered a great deal, and all for the want of knowing how to take care of themselves. I will write you a line from Camargo. Give my love to all at home, and remembrance to those enquiring, from your  
Affectionate brother,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, November 11, 1846.

My dear father :

I have just received your letter of October 13th, written the day of the receipt of the taking of Monterey in New York. When I wrote Emily last, we had been ordered to join General Taylor ; but the order has been suspended for the present, and the probability is that we shall join

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

a division to act against Vera Cruz or Tampico. They do not appear to know their own minds at Washington, from the number of orders and counter-orders they are continually sending out. The first order, after the reception of the news of the taking of Monterey, was to push the war with vigor. On the heels of this came others to act entirely on the defensive, to hold all the country now in our possession, embracing all to the Sierra Madre. This much we know, and it is believed a division is to be organized to act on the coast. If the war is to take this turn, it probably will protract it, but will make it much less expensive for the United States. You cannot imagine how disastrous the war has proved to the volunteers. Many regiments, of seven or eight hundred strong, have lost one hundred by deaths and hundreds by discharges, not half of which will probably ever reach home. You can hardly believe that hundreds have died with nostalgia (homesickness), yet such is the fact attested by many surgeons. On the contrary, the regulars are as healthy as if they were at their posts, and it is believed by all that the country is healthier than any of the southern states. The reason of the difference between the regulars and volunteers is that the latter know nothing about taking care of themselves, about cooking, change of diet, change of habits,

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etc.; while the regulars make themselves as comfortable as if they were in garrison. This year the floods have destroyed most of the vegetables and much of the cotton. Fruits are abundant: oranges, figs, limes, apricots, pomegranates — two or three crops a year. Apples and peaches do not grow, partly because they do not cultivate them. Everything that grows, grows in spite of the people. They plant their corn or cotton, and never touch it again till ripe. You will see corn green and ripe in the same field, and they say you cannot exhaust the land. Our Consul told me, pointing to a piece of ground, that it had raised two crops of corn since he had known it, some fifteen years, and the land appeared now as good as ever. It wants nothing but the Anglo-Saxon here to make it the finest country in the world, and it is filling up. Matamoras is filled with Americans, and they will never leave it. The traffic is almost entirely with horses and mules. These can be raised without trouble, and it is not unusual for one man to own five or six thousand horses, worth from five to twenty-five dollars; mules, twelve or fifteen. The horses are small and worthless for American use, yet the Mexicans are the best riders, and ride more than any other nation in the world, and take less pride in their

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horses. The natives have no religion; it is a mixture of Indian idolatry and superstition with the Catholic. All their ceremonies are different in every particular from the Catholic, which is the only religion tolerated. Many of the ceremonies are entirely Indian in their character; their feasts and rites are the same. The priests that come from the States say they could not recognize the Catholic religion in the mummeries practised here; and their moral character is quite on a par with their religious degradation, but their military qualifications and courage have been greatly underrated. All here say that the rank and file are of superior material, and only want educated officers to lead them, and they could cope with any troops in the world. I have filled this almost entirely with the Mexicans, and I can hardly believe it will prove interesting to you, yet I have nothing else.                      Your affectionate son,

J. S.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, November 23d, 1846.

My dear sister:

I have just received father's letter of 22d ultimo, and yours of the 24th, and the same mail brought a note saying that I had several letters

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at Monterey, probably some of yours amongst them. I wrote you on the 27th of September, giving such an account of the battle as I had then received. Since then I have sent you such incidents as I could rely on, and as I thought would be interesting to you. To account for the letter I wrote on the 24th September, viz.: "that we had entered Monterey without firing a shot," arose thus: General Worth left S——, with his division, two days before General Taylor, and encamped within four miles of the city of Monterey, waiting the arrival of General T——. From this circumstance arose the report, which we believed was true, that he had entered the city. If you have received my later letters, you will see that the loss of life has not been so great as was at first supposed and is now going the rounds of the papers. Four hundred and eighty was the total number killed and wounded, and it is believed that two hundred and forty will cover the number killed,—a great loss truly, but this is small when compared to the loss sustained by the volunteers. One man in every ten has died, three have gone home sick, one half of these will probably never reach there, two of those left are on the sick report, unable to do any duty, making six men, out of ten, a total loss to the service. And not one word can be said in favor

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

of those left; they certainly did not come up to the scratch at Monterey. There are exceptions to this: the Texans fought well, and others, after they got in where they could not get out, did well. One regiment of regulars is worth three of volunteers, and this will be acknowledged except by those politically infatuated. Mr. Polk, in parting with Colonel Watson and his Baltimore regiment, is reported to have said, "Remember that you are not the hirelings of Government, but brave defenders, ready to step into the trench," etc. And now the papers say that the brave Watson was killed fifty yards in advance of his men, which was true; but they might have added that his men broke and ran and left him, and, with few exceptions, did not again get into the battle. It is to be hoped that such defenders will be kept to protect Washington, and that they may be as successful as they were in the last war. You have probably heard of the taking of Tampico by the navy. They have requested a force of five hundred men or more to garrison it, and there is about this force available here. There is a prospect of our going there. I had rather join General Taylor, but I can have no choice — or, rather, I will not be consulted. I long for this war to be over, to go back to the North; yet I see less prospect of it than two

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months ago. The people are too well satisfied with the treatment they have received to wish for such peace as they have had with their own Government; and if it were possible to satisfy them that they would be protected in their religion, I think they would gladly embrace the change.

Your affectionate brother,

J. S.

REYNOSA, MEXICO, November 30, 1846.

My dear father :

Since I wrote you last we have received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to proceed to Tampico. Consequently, we expect to move in the first boat to the mouth of the river; from there, in a larger boat, to Tampico. Appearances indicate that a large force is to be assembled at that point to operate either against Mexico or San Luis Potosi. About one thousand have already embarked, a column of four or five regiments go from Matamoras, another of about the same number from Camargo, and General Taylor takes with him such troops as he can spare, after leaving a sufficient force at Saltillo and Monterey, united with General Wool's command. This is the present plan, but may be altered by circumstances, or may be changed



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at Washington. General Worth remains at Saltillo with his brigade, the best troops in the service, because all regulars and have been thoroughly tried. I think it is the impression at Washington that propositions for peace will be received from Mexico soon after the meeting of their Congress ; this is now close at hand, and we shall see. This, however, on my part is but mere conjecture ; and, on the contrary, we may have a long and disastrous war. Disastrous it will be, even if there is no fighting, for the climate and change of habit of our volunteers will show a frightful chasm in their ranks. But I still encourage the hope that I shall see the North next summer. Tampico lies within the tropics, and, of course, we shall have all the fruits that grow, many of which do not grow here. Oranges are abundant here, and the largest and finest you ever saw. Those that you get north are picked when young, and lose as much by it as an apple does. Figs and pomegranates grow very fine ; in addition to these, they have at Tampico dates, banana, plaintain, cocoa, etc. Since I have commenced this a mail has arrived bringing papers, but no letters — a great disappointment, as I looked for a letter in every mail. Things look bad for the Loco Foco's, and I cannot account for it, unless it is the voters are out here ; but

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things looked worse in forty-four, and I do not despair. The cause of the people will eventually triumph. The "Litchfield Enquirer" of the 5th inst. has exaggerated the losses of the battle at Monterey very much. All the letters published, with few exceptions, come from those that know nothing about it, generally from those that could not be found during the fight. The exact number of killed and wounded is four hundred and eighty, but this is a small number when compared to the list of ordinary deaths. I have received but one short letter from Philo since I have been here; I have written him two or three times. I know that we both are bad correspondents, but, I trust, do not love each other the less. I have endeavored to write home once a week because I hoped that you would be anxious to know that I was well, if nothing more. I received your letter of October 24th, Emily's of 22d, both of which I have answered. I will endeavor to write again before I leave the river, or, at all events, as soon as I arrive at Tampico. In haste,

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

CAMARGO, MEXICO, December 12, 1846.

My dear sister :

When I wrote you last I was expecting every day to go to Tampico, as we had orders to proceed there in the first boat; but the first boat brought re-orders to come to this place, but where we are to go, and when, is more than I can tell. I may have told you Camargo is on a branch of the Rio Grande called the San Juan (St. John), about six miles from its mouth, and about one hundred and twenty from Reinosá, and is the dirtiest place in all Mexico. You can imagine something of the filth when I tell you that the supplies for the whole army pass through here, and are all overhauled, and no small quantity found decayed. This employs some five or six hundred men, and the river is not large enough to carry off the damaged matter. Add to this the dust, which is about six inches in depth (and a little deeper around my tent), with an extra number of wag-gons continually driving about it,—imagine all this, and you have some idea of my sufferings — or, as somebody said, “Our sufferings is in-tents.” I was in hopes of going to Tampico to see more active service, if there is to be more, but this for the present is denied; but unless a speedy

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peace is made, I shall yet have my share. We have had no mail for more than two weeks, but are expecting one daily, as we have heard of the arrival of a boat at the mouth of the river. Although we have no magnetic telegraph here, we always hear of the arrival of a boat some two or three days before the mail. This we look upon as an era, for besides hearing from home, we get all the news of the campaign, of which we would remain in ignorance were it not for the papers. These are read for their extravagance, as no one acquainted with the facts ever thinks of publishing them, or looking there for them. Yet they are devoured to be laughed at; when some poor devil is found as the author, that is an end of him—he can't stand the ridicule that is heaped upon him. The weather is very warm in the daytime, the nights cool, but no frost, no rain for three months, which accounts for all the dust that I mentioned. The dews are very heavy—so much so that you think there has been a shower when you rise in the morning. The main reliance for vegetation is the dew, as frequently for months they have no rain. This is more particularly the case as you proceed towards the Pacific in this latitude. But as you proceed south one hundred and fifty miles, you

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come to a chain of mountains called the Sierra Madre, whose climate assimilates to our own. They raise grain, apples, peaches, etc. Monterey lies at the base, and from the top you can look down and see showers pouring down upon the city copiously whilst you are far above them. Here you find springs boiling up, and streams like our own pouring down the sides of the mountain, and here is ice. This chain runs from Tampico to Saltillo, and on, I believe, to the Pacific, and there is no crossing except through the gorges ; one is at Tampico around the base, one at Victoria for mules only, and one at Monterey. Transportation is almost entirely by mules, frequently in droves of five hundred, carrying about three hundred pounds. They have no waggons, but a sort of cart drawn by oxen yoked by the horns as you have seen represented as the custom in Spain. The absurdities of the old country are all they have retained except the religion, and that is so mixed up with Indian superstition that it has lost its character of Catholicism. Our Catholics will not acknowledge it as their religion, but as you get into the interior I suppose it approaches nearer to it ; at all events, it is under the sway of the Pope. I have had no letter from home for two months ;

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I hope mine go more regular. I hear of two or three for me at Monterey. Write often, don't be discouraged, and believe me, as ever,

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CAMARGO, MEXICO, December 23, 1846.

My dear father :

After being without a mail for five weeks, last night we received one, and after waiting till thirty bushels of letters and papers were assorted I found a letter from home, and after reading it nearly through, I looked at the date and found it was written the 19th of August, having received two or three later. It is now more than six weeks without a word from home, yet I know you write often, and this is consolation. We have had a good deal of excitement for the last three days from apprehension for the safety of General Worth and his command. To give you a slight idea of the position of troops since the battle of Monterey, and movements now taking place : General Worth had gone to Saltillo with his brigade, numbering twelve hundred men. This, you will recollect, is seventy miles in advance of Monterey. General Wool had taken a position at Parras, sixty miles in advance of

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Saltillo; his force is about twenty-three hundred men. General Taylor, after leaving a small force at Monterey, left there on the 15th inst., with about three thousand men, to proceed to Victoria. Following the chain of mountains here, he was to have been met by General Patterson with his division from Matamoras, numbering somewhere about twenty-five hundred; and, after leaving a sufficient number to guard the pass of Victoria, the rest were to march to Tampico. Two days' march from Monterey would bring General Taylor to Montemorelos, where there was a depot with one regiment of regulars and two or three companies of volunteers. Between this place and Monterey was stationed a regiment of volunteers; at this place, one brigade of volunteers consisting of three regiments, numbering about sixteen hundred, and one mounted regiment about five hundred; these, with two companies of regular dragoons, were the disposable force at this place, leaving as a guard here one company dragoons, one artillery (mine), and a regiment of volunteers. This was the position of the troops on the 15th, the day General Taylor was to leave Monterey. Early on the morning of the 19th an express arrived here from General Worth, directing all the troops to move up to his assistance with the utmost dispatch. He had

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information of the advance of Santa Anna with a large army, variously estimated at from twelve to thirty thousand men, and within twenty leagues of him, endeavoring to come between General Wool and himself. He immediately dispatched an express to General Wool to join him, also to General Taylor and this place. On the arrival of the express at Monterey, all the troops at that place made forced marches to join him. General Taylor had left on the 15th, and this was the 19th, consequently he could not reach Saltillo before the 22d. The regiment stationed between this place and Monterey would reach there about the same time, and probably General Wool's army a little sooner. This would make a force of seven thousand five hundred if he is not attacked before the 22d, and if not before the 24th the brigade from this place will have reached there, increasing it two thousand. With this force he could repel any attack made on him, but everybody feels that he is in the most dangerous position—more so than General Taylor was before the battles of the 8th and 9th. Yet I have great faith in General Worth and his troops; he has the best troops in the service, but he may be overpowered. Some think he will fall back to the pass, and eventually to Monterey, to give time

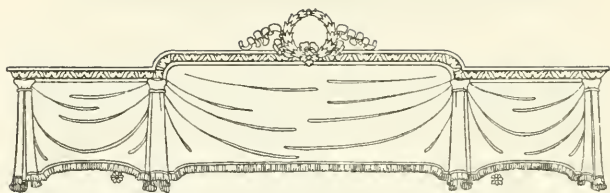


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for all his troops to join him. I think he will fight at Saltillo, and the next news will be of a most bloody battle. What the result will be, I dare not predict. It was a great mistake to divide our troops up, as has been done; but this plan was matured at Washington and must be right. Nine more regiments have been ordered out, so I conclude there is no prospect of an end to the war at present. I was in hopes of seeing home early in the spring, but they begin to dissipate. There is a great deal of sickness among the volunteers, but very little among the regulars. I have had uncommonly good health since I have been here. There is no news now but General Worth's dangerous position. Several couriers have gone urging on the troops to his assistance. I will give you the earliest news that can be relied on. I have expected to go to Tampico, and still hope to leave this place. I had forgotten to mention that General Patterson's command had not been changed.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.



1847

CAMARGO, MEXICO, January 1, 1847.

My dear father :

When I wrote last, 20th of last month, there was every probability that General Worth had been or soon would be attacked by the Mexican army, but it did not turn out so. The General was right in everything but the numbers. It proved to be a reconnoitering division of some three or four thousand men, of which General Taylor had perfect knowledge, but General Worth brought him back by what he considered better information. All the movements took place as I wrote you, and almost the whole army were concentrated there (Saltillo) for a few days. We were in great alarm here at the time, and put up additional works, mustering the

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citizens, etc., ready to meet them should they undertake to take the place, as they undoubtedly would if they had met with the least success. A mail arrived last night, but I did not get a letter. It has now been nearly three months since I have had one, and I do not know what has become of them. I am going in the first boat to Tampico ; probably shall be there in about fifteen days. General Scott has arrived here, with, it is understood, all the powers the President can confer on him, both diplomatic and military. This, it is hoped, will have a happy effect upon the Mexican Government and bring about a speedy peace. This, for one, I heartily wish. I am tired of this vagabond sort of life ; 't is not so pleasant as playing the soldier in New York. General Scott has gone to Tampico, and will probably be there when we arrive. Then I may hear something more definitely about the prospect of remaining here another year. We have just received the President's message, but none of the reports. We are looking with some anxiety for Mr. Marcy's, to see what he has recommended for the army.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

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MOUTH RIO GRANDE, MEXICO,

January 15, 1847.

My dear sister :

On leaving Camargo on the 3d inst., I received your letter of November 10th, the first one that I have had for nearly six weeks. I had one from Eliza and Henry at the same time ; by these I learned that they had written several times before, but which I have not received. It is a pleasure to know that you are not forgotten by your friends, even if you do not have the satisfaction of receiving their letters ; yet this is one of the cases where the will will not answer as well as the deed. General Scott arrived at Camargo on the 2d inst. ; at the time we were embarked for Tampico, but he detained us one day to escort him. We are now waiting for him at this place, and probably shall not sail for two weeks. Troops are arriving daily and organizing here and at Tampico for some expedition, probably Vera Cruz. Everything indicates that it is to be a vigorous one ; no expense has been spared in perfecting its organization. More than fifty staff officers have been sent, and those of the highest rank, to complete the general's staff. The most perfect siege-train ever seen in our country has arrived, and a corps of rocketeers and mountain howitzers.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

It now seems that the Government has at last determined to bring Mexico to her senses ; and if these exertions had been made early in the fall, it is more than likely that the campaign would have closed the war. Everything has been done, with the limited means furnished General Taylor, the most sanguine could expect, but they have been nothing like proportionate to the object to be attained. No one, of course, knows the General's plan of operation ; but it is believed, from movements of troops and other indications, that the expedition is to be against the city of Vera Cruz. I think that all the available troops are to be concentrated here and at Tampico and embarked from the nearest point to Vera Cruz practicable and take the city. The fortification can only be taken by cutting off the supplies ; this is done by taking the city, cutting off the supplies by land and the navy by water. The best engineers think it impossible to reduce it by water ; all this of course is mere conjecture. The Mexicans all along the river have a report that the Mexican Congress are disposed for peace, and have opened negotiations ; I pray that it may be so, but do not place any reliance upon it. I have suffered more with the cold since I have been here than I ever did at the North. Last week

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we had what the Mexicans call a "norther" that lasted two days; it was wet, and the rain froze as fast as it fell; our tent was one sheet of ice, and by placing a small pan of coals in it and sitting on it you could keep from freezing, but if you attempted to warm the tent the ice thawed and came dripping through, making it more uncomfortable than the cold. The third day after this was so warm that we all sat outside of our tents with our coats off. The night that it came on I went to bed without any covering, and in an hour's time I could not get enough to keep me from suffering; this is the character of the weather at this place. In the interior, as the wind sweeps over the warm sand it becomes warm, and as far as I have seen seldom makes ice; still farther, as you approach the mountains the climate partakes of that of Virginia. It hardly seems credible that this river which you can easily throw a stone over rises in the latitude of Boston. I have been up it four hundred and fifty miles in a steamboat, and boats have gone three hundred farther, and it has a current of from four to six miles an hour. I miss very much the proceedings of Congress. We have as yet only the President's message and rumors of some increase of the army, just enough to make us uneasy, and not enough to satisfy curi-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

osity. I had some idea of making an effort to push for one of the new regiments, but I have come to the conclusion not to do it. If a reduction takes place after the war, it must be by disbanding these regiments, and I prefer taking my chance with my own regiment, hoping some more ambitious officer above me may get it, so as to place me near a captaincy. The sun shines bright to-day, and it is as warm as September with you. In about a week we may expect another "norther," and then I shall talk as much about leaving this vile place as I now do about promotion. With such ups and downs, "who would not be a soldier?"

Your affectionate brother,  
J. SEDGWICK.

MOUTH RIO GRANDE, MEXICO,  
January 20, 1847.

My dear sister :

You will perceive that I am still at this place, although when I wrote last I expected to have left before this. The whole regular force is encamped near here, and the old saw, "large bodies move slowly," is fully exemplified. Everything indicates that we are to have a sharp and perhaps bloody campaign. It is more than probable that it is to be directed against Vera

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

Cruz. Who can tell or foresee the result? I have no evil forebodings—on the contrary, feel that I shall see you all again; but our destiny is in the hands of the All-Powerful, and if I fall, I hope I shall fall like a soldier. A few days will decide the campaign. The transports are waiting to take the troops off, and in ten days we shall move. I will write again soon—no time or convenience now.

Your affectionate brother,  
J. S.

STEAMER MASSACHUSETTS, OFF RIO GRANDE,  
February 9, 1847.

My dear father:

You will perceive that I am still here where I last wrote you, with not much prospect of leaving soon. The troops are slowly embarking, but the means and the unsheltered coast present great obstacles to their rapidity. More than a thousand horses are to go with forage and water, and every horse has first to be slung into a lighter and from that into the vessel in which he is to go, and it is in pleasant weather only that these lighters can proceed outside the breakers. General Scott is growing impatient to be off, and hurrying everybody, but time and tide will not be hurried. This is



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

to be a most magnificent expedition ; no expense has been spared in getting it up ; every contingency that it was possible to foresee has been guarded against. Yet many predict its want of success. A failure it cannot be, as the means furnished can be turned to other accounts. Every vessel brings officers, men, ammunition, stores, etc. Yesterday the steamer *Editb* passed within a few yards of us, so near that we recognized and spoke to Colonel Bankhead and Lieutenant Nichols, who have just arrived from New York. Lieutenant Nichols came out in the same vessel that I did last spring, was at Monterey, and afterwards was appointed adjutant of the regiment and joined headquarters at New York, and is now ordered out the second time. He was transferred from my company when we left New York to equalize the officers in the companies.

. . . . .  
This vessel (when she sails) goes to Tampico. The others rendezvous behind Lobos Island, sixty miles south, and from thence to Vera Cruz with the whole regular force ; some three or four volunteer regiments now here and five of the six regiments are to go there, viz. : two regiments, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Many of them have al-

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ready proceeded to their place of rendezvous. The captain of the vessel tells us that we have seen nothing to compare with the fruits of Tampico and its vicinity, and from his description I should think not, although I have seen some and could tell stories that would seem incredible. One is, that cotton grows on the banks of this river, after planting, for three years, producing every year. In the States it requires as much cultivation as corn, and never produces but once, the first winter killing the stalks. And it is so with the fruits, many kinds producing two and three crops in a year. The New Orleans papers are filled with the outrages of the volunteers, and the governor has called out the militia to preserve order, and has requested Government not to send any more troops through there. If such has been the conduct of men who sacrifice their lives for their country before they reach the enemy's ground, what can be expected from them when here? What has already happened? Rape, plunder, murder, and everything else abominable; and these are the men who decry a standing army as being dangerous to the liberties of the people. They ought to be dangerous to such liberties. I am no longer a democrat. I go for an empire, governed by a strong hand, reserving the right

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

of revolutionizing—when opposition becomes too hard. But opposition is better than the liberties we see and read of. I will send again from Tampico. In a month you will hear of great things, either a retreat or a glorious victory.

Remember me as ever your dutiful son,  
J. SEDGWICK.

OFF TAMPICO, MEXICO,  
February 20, 1847.

My dear sister :

I left the Brazos on the 17th inst. in the steamship *Massachusetts*, having on board General Scott and staff, numbering some thirty officers, some colonels, majors, captains, etc., with about two hundred fifty soldiers. We arrived at this place yesterday morning, making the passage in three days (two hundred eighty miles), having most of the time slight breezes, and those not favorable. Although this is a steamship, she does not use her steam excepting in calms or where the wind is very light and ahead, but depends principally upon her sails, like an ordinary sailing vessel. Most of the time we were in sight of land, which presents, till within a few miles of Tampico, the same sandy, arid appearance that the whole coast does from

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New Orleans to the Brazos. For the last few miles, say forty, the shore presents a bold, rugged line, apparently rocky and covered with large timbers. Some of the mountains loom up as large as some of the Cornwall Hills. I have not been ashore yet, consequently know nothing about Tampico, except from reports, which speak very favorably of it. Plenty of all sorts of fruit, and of the finest kinds, oranges, figs, pomegranates, prunes, etc., and just now the climate is delightful, but the long summers and extreme heat are very debilitating and require a Northern winter to invigorate and strengthen a person to enable him to commence again.

General Scott and suite have gone on shore to hurry on matters there, and expect to leave in a day or two, but the great strike will not be made in a month or more, as everything moves very slowly. Vessels arrive very slow, and troops still slower, and after all arrive it will take a long time to organize so large a force collected from so many different places. There are about three thousand already assembled, and about ten more expected, that are on the way from the Brazos, all to meet at an island about sixty miles below here—Lobos. From there we sail in company,—in all, ninety-six vessels,—proceed a few miles below Vera

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

Cruz, and effect a landing if possible. This I believe to be the intended expedition; circumstances may change it. Nothing has been spared in perfecting it, and I ardently hope it may be a successful one, yet so many little things may change the operations that it may prove very hazardous; I long to see the end.

On arriving here we learned of the death of a young officer of our regiment who died at this place on the 6th instant. He was graduated in '42 and had been promoted but a few months; when his company left New York in September he was dangerously ill, as they did not tell him till after the company had sailed. This had a great effect on him, and he insisted upon coming out long before his physician thought he was able; his death may be attributed to his zealous devotion to his duty. This is the first death in my regiment for five years and the third natural one in this army since its arrival at Corpus Christi, twenty months since. I receive but few letters from home—not more than twice for the last four months, and these very old. I hope mine do not receive the same fate. I generally write about once a month home, and occasionally to Philo or Eliza; but if hereafter you do not receive them so often, do not be alarmed, as perhaps no opportunity for sending

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will occur, if I should be enabled to write ; and you are indebted for this to a calm, which gives me a short interruption in my seasickness. I suffered very much for a few days before we sailed ; we had a heavy " norther," which blew us out to sea and made sad havoc amongst the lubbers. I had a letter some time since from Henry, offering his services in procuring promotion into any new regiment that may be raised, which I declined, merely because I thought they would be disbanded at the end of the war, and I might then want his services in retaining my commission. His friend Lieutenant Peck is now on board with me, and we are talking of concocting a letter for Henry.

Your affectionate brother,  
J. S.

STEAMER MASSACHUSETTS, OFF LOBOS ISLAND,

February 28, 1847.

My dear sister :

I have a few moments to spare before the vessel sails that will take letters to Tampico for the States. I last wrote you from Tampico about the 19th instant. We sailed from there the next day and arrived here the following one, making the passage in about sixteen hours. We found about twenty vessels of the expedi-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

tion already here, and since then about ten more have arrived, and others are daily arriving. The regulars are now all here, with about three thousand volunteers, and the General says he shall not wait for more troops, but as soon as General Worth and one more vessel bringing ordnance arrive he shall proceed to Vera Cruz. This island contains about one hundred acres, sandy soil and covered with thick wood, consisting of mesquit and other trees common to the country that I have already been in, and also the india-rubber tree, that I have never before seen. It grows usually about the size of a tamarack tree in our yard, but an infinite number of branches, covering over nearly as much ground as the whole yard ; its leaf, shaped like a diamond, very dark green, is thick and sticky. I drew my knife through the bark and a thin white substance oozed out, looking very much like milk, sticky, but not much odor. I am told that this is collected and spread with a brush over some surface, making the india rubber. Water is found by digging a few inches, usually near the foot of some tree. It is not very fresh, but enough so to make it drinkable. The island is surrounded by a coral reef, some two or three hundred yards from shore, which breaks the breakers, and between this and the shore is clear,

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smooth water of about two or three feet in depth, making the finest sort of fishing. All sorts and all sizes, from the shark to the minnow, are congregated here, being probably the first visit they have received from either the barbarian or the most humane, and they are suffering some. We had hardly dropped our anchor here before a small schooner was alongside from down East, having on board chickens, apples, eggs, onions, cabbages, etc., almost everything that grows down there. A pilot came on board our vessel a few miles out; his first words told where he was from: "Clus up that mainsail." He came down here a few days before us, found out the anchorage, and is now making from twenty to fifty dollars a day for his service. To hear one pointing out the vessels, you would suppose they were all from down East. Ques. "Do you know what vessel that is?" pointing to one. "That is the *Mary Jane*, from Portland." "Well, what vessel's that?" "Why, that is the *Anna Maria*, from Stonington." And so on through half the fleet, but it is the most beautiful sight I ever saw—the vessels covered with troops—and every evening to hear the music of six or eight bands is delightful to even so unmusical an ear as mine. My servant, George, died at Tampico a few days since. I left him



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

there sick, but expected him to join me here, and to-day I heard he was dead. I have had him so long (eight years), and I believe he was so faithfully attached to me, that I regret his death very much, but I hope he is better off. You will not, probably, hear from me again till I am in Vera Cruz. We sail in a day or two, and much will depend on the weather where we land, and some, perhaps, on the Mexicans ; but I have every confidence in our troops and the success of the expedition. Yet something will depend upon good luck, and Eliza says I have plenty of that. There are now sixteen officers seated at the table, writing letters home and to their sweethearts. I am thinking what a jolly time somebody will have when they get them, although, as Mark Tapley would say, "there is no credit in being jolly under such circumstances ; 't is only when you don't get letters you get credit for being jolly."

As ever yours,

J. S.

STEAMSHIP MASSACHUSETTS,

ANTON LIZARDO,

March 6, 1847.

My dear sister :

We sailed from Lobos Island on the 2d inst. and anchored at this place, twelve miles south

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of Vera Cruz, yesterday morning, and are only waiting for two or three vessels to come up before we commence disembarking. Before you receive this you will have seen that General Taylor has had another great battle, and, we all agree, a victory, although we have had no account of this except through the Mexicans. From Santa Anna's own account I am satisfied that he is well licked; this comes in the right time for us, as the ball will open in a few days. We sailed from Lobos about twelve o'clock on the 2d. Our ship gave the signal to weigh anchor and proceed to this anchorage by firing a gun. At the same time this vessel got under weigh and, with her steam, sailed through the squadron, and as we passed each vessel the men sent up such cheers as made the air ring, and those vessels that had bands on board (and there were seven or eight) had them playing; at one time there were four heard distinctly, and this, taken with the enthusiasm exhibited by the soldiers, was cheering indeed, and, as the General said, "was the sure presage of victory." The last vessel we passed was that of Colonel Bankhead with four hundred of the 2d Artillery (my regiment), which gave him (the General) cheer after cheer. I was standing by his side, and remarked to him that the 2d had not forgotten

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

him; he said, "No, the rascals want to fight; they are no better than they were thirty-three years ago, when I commanded them; they were always for getting into the hottest part of it then."

The second day out, early in the morning, we were about two miles from the Castle of San Juan, when it commenced blowing, and by ten it blew a hurricane. The next morning we found ourselves about thirty miles south of this, and, by steam, at one o'clock we anchored here. There were about forty sail already here, besides some eight naval vessels, and that day as many as twenty more joined us. There are now about seventy-five here; the whole fleet consists of a hundred sail, but as soon as two light batteries arrive the disembarkation will commence. To-day the General, with his staff, proceeded in a small steamer to reconnoiter the position of town, castle, etc., and when opposite the castle and about one and a half miles from it, the enemy opened out fire upon the boat and fired some twenty shots without doing any injury. After finishing this reconnoissance the steamer returned. We could see distinctly the flash of their guns and hear the report, and of course looked with some anxiety to see the fate of the little steamer that held "Cæsar and his for-

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tunes." This shows something of what they intend for us, but for the results there can be but one anticipation, and that is victory. After writing this much I was called away to prepare the boats for disembarking, and the order is to commence at sunrise to-morrow. It is getting quite warm—as hot as it is in Connecticut in May. If everything goes well I hope to be up in the table-lands in a month or six weeks; there it is cool and healthy. We have a good many luxuries here in the way of living; generally the first vessel that boards us is some Yankee steamer loaded with notions. On some of them they will not only bring, but raise poultry for sale, and keep them for eggs. There has been no communication with the shore yet; as soon as there is we hope to get plenty of fruit.

Remember your affectionate brother,

J. S.

CAMP BEFORE VERA CRUZ,

March 22, 1847.

My dear sister :

I have time to give you but little news save to tell you of our safe landing, meeting but little opposition till we had nearly invested the town; since then they have kept up a continual fire upon us, doing little or no injury

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

Our batteries are to open upon the town at two o'clock to-day, and it is the impression that we shall have possession of it in forty-eight hours. So far they have had all the fun on their side ; now comes our turn. We landed thirteen days ago, and have had some duty since—in fact, I have been up every other night and on duty almost every day. I did not intend to write again till we had Vera Cruz ; but hearing that the *Princeton* was to sail within an hour, I send this line. I will give you a minute account of everything since landing. So far we have lost one officer and six or eight men, and in all probability we shall get the town with very little loss. In great haste,

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CAMP NEAR VERA CRUZ,

March 27, 1847.

My dear father :

I wrote Emily a line on the 23d inst. informing her of my safety, etc., and I now can give you the more pleasing information that the city of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan de Ulloa are now in our possession. Commissioners are now in session arranging minor details of capitulation. They are on our part Generals Worth,

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Pillow, and Colonel Totten. This protracted siege of sixteen days has been accomplished with the loss of two officers and not to exceed ten men, and perhaps forty wounded, on our part. On theirs it cannot be ascertained accurately, but is supposed to be much greater. I will give you, as far as possible, the occurrences from day to day as they fell under my own observation. I wrote you last about the 8th instant, while lying at Anton Lizardo, an anchorage about nine or ten miles from the city. All arrangements were made and orders issued for debarking the next morning. The first brigade, composed of the 2d and 3d regiments artillery, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th regiments of infantry, was the first line (under General Worth); the second were the volunteers, three brigades (under Major-General Patterson, Brigadiers Shields, Pillow, and Quitman); and the reserve, 1st and 4th artillery, 1st, 2d, 3d, and 7th infantry (under General Twiggs); the whole, under General Scott, amounted to about eleven thousand, some two or three regiments not having arrived. At about ten o'clock the signal was made for weighing anchor, and as our ship passed through the fleet everybody appeared in the highest spirits. The General said he wanted no better evidence of success than

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

what he saw. As we came in sight of our landing-place dinner was announced. The General said all officers of the first line must go down, and promptly, as it might be several days before we got another good dinner. While we were at dinner the General came down, and calling for a glass of wine, said that he would give us a sentiment, remarking before he offered it that he looked upon it as a perilous thing to land in the face of an enemy, organize under fire, attack and drive him from his position, etc., but that he had all confidence in our Generals and soldiers, etc., and then gave this toast: "The glory of our country and success to the first brigade." Just at this moment we heard the anchor fall, and in ten minutes all the vessels had come to anchor and the signals were made to get into the surf-boats and prepare to land. As fast as they got in, the boats fell behind the frigate *Raritan* and held on to her till the signal should be given to land. This, I think, was the most beautiful sight I ever saw, as the boats fell in their places, the colors flying, the bands playing, etc. When the signal was made to land, as the boats cast off and stood for shore the navy and 2d and 3d lines sent up cheer after cheer that might have been heard for miles. On our part nothing was heard but the oarsmen,

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as each boat and regiment rivalled each other as to who should first reach the land. Just as we reached the land we raised a cheer that made it ring, and which was returned from the fleet. Some small vessels of the navy had gone in close to shore and opened their fire to ascertain if there were any batteries—if so, to draw their fire; but we landed without firing a shot, and a glorious opportunity for the enemy was lost forever—for after we had formed our line of battle ten thousand Mexicans could not have broken it, whereas one thousand previous to our landing would have annoyed us seriously, if not have prevented it. It was now nearly sundown. The line of battle was formed, and after taking possession of some heights we were wheeled into columns to the right. Our regiment (the 2d) found themselves in advance. Our company was ordered forward as skirmishers. In this order one half the men were permitted to lie down at a time, and the officers prepared to take such rest as circumstances and our wet condition would allow. Everything remained quiet until about three o'clock, when a brisk firing in front brought us to our feet. This soon ceased, and we began to think it a false alarm, when another discharge, accompanied by an unintelligible whistling over our heads, con-



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

vinced us it was no joke, if so intended. As might be expected, no more sleep that night, and at daylight we prepared to move forward. One light company moved forward, and the regiment was ordered to support it. The company moved forward slowly until they reached the second ridge, when a body of lancers and infantry were discovered in the valley, and a party deployed upon an adjoining hill. As these fellows showed no disposition to move, Captain Taylor was ordered to bring up a field-piece, a shot or two of which sent them off double quick. Our regiment then moved forward and took position on the hill just vacated by the enemy, and the rest of the brigade came up and took possession on our left by regiments, as they arrived. On this hill we remained all day watching the progress of the second brigade, each detachment of which, in taking up its position, had to drive the enemy before it. As we showed ourselves on the hill the castle and three forts opened their fire upon us, though none of them reached us to do us any damage. At sunset we withdrew to the base of the hill and took the position which we now occupy, being the right of the line of investment. We remained quiet during the night; about daylight a smart firing on our left told us that the

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second division had some work to do. General Pillow to-day took a magazine with some six hundred pounds of powder and twelve hundred rockets. The other regiments moved on to take their position. The third day the line of investment was completed and all communication was cut off between city and country. This day we had the misfortune to lose Captain Alburtis by a cannon-ball, and two riflemen. The loss of the Mexicans up to this time was seventeen. This included three days. In my next I will continue the progress of the siege. I shall have more time in a day or so, certainly more conveniences. I have been extremely well ever since I have been here, although I have been up nearly every other night.

Adieu !

J. SEDGWICK.

VERA CRUZ, MEXICO,

April 2, 1847.

My dear father :

Before you receive this you will probably receive a note from Captain Swartwout, who left here a few days since, very unexpectedly to me, as I did not know he was going till he had gone on board the vessel. I had not time to write even a line, but requested him, when he arrived

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

in New York, to drop you a line letting you know I am well. When I last wrote I told you of the surrender of this place ; I think I gave you the events up to the 12th, and I now continue them as nearly as I remember. From the 12th to the 16th but little was done on either side except skirmishing by parties out reconnoitering. On the 16th strong parties were ordered out to drive in all the enemy's pickets, which was done with little loss ; at this time our engineers selected positions for our batteries. As this was done within reach of the enemy's batteries, nothing could be done by daylight. At night the trench was opened and continued, with strong guards out to assist the working party if attacked. On the night of the 19th the batteries were nearly ready for the guns. I was ordered out in advance to watch any movements that might take place and to retire to the trench at daylight. Just at break of day I entered the trench ; the working party, consisting of three hundred men, were about being relieved by another party to continue the work during the day. The parties were passing each other in different directions, the guards at each end, when an officer and perhaps fifty men (Mexicans) rode up to us, discovered our work, fired their pieces, and retreated to the town. Up to

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this time they had kept up a continual random firing, but had not discovered exactly our position. As soon as it was fairly light they opened all their batteries upon us, and kept it up all day ; but the trench was so far advanced that it completely sheltered us from all direct firing, but the shells flew over us and burst over us for more than twelve hours without killing any one and only wounding five or six. At dark I was relieved, for before this no one could leave the trench with safety. From this time to the 22d the time was occupied in bringing up the mortars, guns, etc., making magazines, filling them, etc. On the 22d we had eight mortars and six thirty-two pounders ready to open their fire. At twelve o'clock the General sent a flag demanding the surrender of the town and castle, to which he received a very polite answer from the Governor, saying he had been entrusted with the safety of the place and would defend it with all his means, etc. You will recollect up to this time we had not fired a shot, but they had kept up a continual firing since the morning of the 19th. At four o'clock we opened fire upon them with all the guns we had in position, and kept up an incessant fire during the night and following day. This night four more mortars were placed ready to open, but,

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

a “norther” blowing, we could not get ammunition from the ship to supply them. On the 23d and 24th ammunition was landed, a battery of twenty four-pounders was established, and on the morning of the 25th all opened and continued during the day, and such destruction as was made you cannot conceive—almost every shell striking a house demolished it. I had charge of a battery of four mortars at daylight on the 26th; the evening previous eight more mortars had been placed but were not fixed. We kept the fire up till three o’clock, when a flag was sent into town with some message. The enemy had not fired since nine o’clock in the morning, but till that time they had thundered away at our batteries with all their might. Firing on our part was not resumed till two o’clock in the morning. Very soon after we heard a bugle from the walls blowing a parley. Some man told me it was one; I immediately ceased firing and sent word to the commanding officer in the battery to order the batteries to cease, but, hearing nothing more, they commenced again. The bugle and flag proceeded to camp, and orders immediately came to cease firing, but a few minutes before I had been relieved by another firing party. The flag requested that commissioners might be ap-

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pointed to arrange the conditions of a surrender; this was done, and arrangements made and signed on the 27th, and on the 29th we took formal possession of the town and castle. The conditions were that the enemy were to give up all guns, ammunition, and public property of every description, to march out and stack their arms, and surrender themselves prisoners of war. The officers were paroled and pledged that the men should not serve till the close of the war unless exchanged. Their number, as near as possible to guess, was five general officers, sixteen colonels, more than two hundred company officers, more than four thousand nine hundred rank and file, making in round numbers five thousand two hundred. This with a loss on our part of not to exceed twenty killed and sixty wounded. On their part, by the estimate made by themselves, there are from two to five hundred; they cannot tell, as so many had left the city previously. It is the most complete victory of science in modern warfare. At no time did we have more than six hundred men engaged, except to invest the place. I have a great deal more to say at some other time; till then believe me to be

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

VERA CRUZ, MEXICO,

April 10, 1847.

My dear sister :

My last three letters were directed to father, as they were so intimately connected with the events here that I thought it best not to separate them ; and I would here request, if I have not before done it, that you would preserve them, as there are some things in them which I might like to refer to. I hardly remember where I left off, but it was about the time of the capitulation, the terms of which I have sent you in a paper called the Vera Cruz "Eagle." The scene was one of the most brilliant I ever witnessed. Not alone for the novelty of seeing a vanquished foe laying down his arms, although this might have added to the effect, but it was the *tout ensemble*, the chivalry of the armies meeting on a vast plain, one marching out of the city which they had gallantly defended and laying down their arms ; the other receiving their arms and marching in. Our troops were drawn up on this vast plain, several miles in extent, the right resting near to the principal gate of the city, through which their troops were to leave. At a given signal their flags were lowered from the forts and castle and the gates thrown open and the troops issued out ; each

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regiment, preceded by its band of music, halting when opposite our line, stacked their arms and hung upon them their accoutrements and then resumed their march in the direction indicated in the terms of capitulation. As each regiment or detachment evacuated a fort, our troops marched in, raised the Stars and Stripes, and saluted them with the same guns which but a few days previously had been thundering death and destruction to us.

This town is an old Spanish one, with but very few modern houses. The old ones were once splendid, most of them very costly. The cathedral is two hundred years old, and its style of architecture is of that period; very magnificent. There are the usual number of saints and other decorations, but not so rich as in most of the cathedrals. Outside of the walls of the city is the cemetery, a most beautiful place surrounded by a high wall. At the corners, large stone pyramids, and at the entrance a highly ornamented gateway with marble flagging walks. In the center there is a small but most beautiful church, all the interior of which, including the altar, is of the most highly polished marble. All this was destroyed by their own guns. Our batteries, being established in advance of this, were connected by a trench to



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

cover the men. Almost every gun fired at two of our batteries struck either the wall or church, and as this was kept up for ten days or more you can imagine how much it was riddled. This was certainly to be regretted, but could not be avoided, as we could not change the position of our batteries to protect their property. The destruction caused by our guns in the town is incalculable. Houses whose outer walls seem whole have been struck by a bomb in the roof, then falling to the basement, bursting and tearing out all the interior. Many of the bombs fell into the handsomest buildings, almost entirely demolishing them, but you will see enough of this in the papers. We expected to have gone to Jalapa before this. Two divisions have gone, and ours, the only one left, will go in four days. Probably I shall not write again until I get there. All travellers say that it is a cool, healthy, and delightful country, the climate assimilating to our own, with fruits and vegetables corresponding. You will hardly believe me when I tell you I can look out of my tent and see the mountains covered with snow, yet such is the fact. It is a chain called the Orizaba, about fifty miles from here, and seventeen thousand feet above the sea. Yet all the ice we get here comes from Boston, when with a little en-

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ergy it might be brought with one-tenth the cost. I think it high time some country took possession of this, and I should be in favor of doing it were it not for keeping the army here. I am anxious to see the North again, although I would not have missed seeing this.

Your affectionate brother,  
J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF PEROTE, MEXICO,

April 22, 1847.

My dear sister :

You have probably heard before this that we have had a battle with Santa Anna, and that the result has been victory to our arms. I cannot give you any of the particulars, and you will excuse me, I know, when I tell you that I have marched fifteen miles to-day, eighteen yesterday, and so on. I will give you the result in a few words: We left Vera Cruz on the 13th instant, marched one day, when it was ascertained that the enemy occupied a strong position in front and was determined to give us a hard battle. On the fourth evening we arrived within five miles of the pass (Cerro Gordo), rested the next day, attacked Santa Anna on the morning of the 6th, and in two hours had en-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

tirely routed him, killing and dispersing one thousand men, taking six thousand prisoners with all their arms, forty pieces of cannon, a great quantity of ammunition, etc. Santa Anna escaped, it is said, with four thousand men. The next day we commenced the pursuit, reached Jalapa, driving them through, and through another pass, which they had strongly fortified, where a few determined men might have held a large army. The gun-carriages were burning when we passed through; they abandoned this place, one of the strongest and finest I ever saw. Day after to-morrow we follow them to Puebla, a city of seventy-five thousand inhabitants; and it is believed they will make some resistance, but they are so completely panic-stricken that there is no telling what they will do. The distance to Puebla is seventy-five miles, and thirty-three from here to Jalapa, General Scott's headquarters. The city of Mexico is only seventy miles from Puebla, and with a few more troops we might soon be there. I am so tired that I can hardly hold my pen; the express comes in two hours, or to-morrow, or I would send you a long letter; but I will, as soon as we get to a stop, give you the particulars of the battle and such other observations as I

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hope you will find interesting. There are three of us writing around one tallow candle, and writing pretty much the same sentence.

Your brother, in great haste,

J. S.

TEPEYAHUALCO, MEXICO,

April 30, 1847.

My dear sister :

I left Perote, as I wrote in my last note, on the morning of the 25th, and after two days' march reached this place, about thirty miles distant. Last evening, about dark, we were gratified by the appearance of a large five-mile train loaded with letters and papers from the States, and perhaps such a busy time never before was seen, unless it was in mounting the hill of Cerro Gordo. Amongst them was yours of the 26th of March, the only one from home. I promised to give you a detailed description of our last battle, but you will have to content yourself with a very imperfect one, as the field of operations was so extended, and the immediate dispersion of the different columns in pursuit of the enemy renders it impossible to give a correct one. General Worth's division of the army left Vera Cruz on the 13th inst., four days after the division under General Twiggs,

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

with orders to proceed by easy marches on Jalapa, as no opposition was then expected ; but on the second day out an express brought the news that the enemy had fortified a strong position in front and that General Twiggs was waiting for reinforcements to force it—but our troops were not to be forced—in order that they might be fresh on their arrival. On the evening of the 16th we reached General Twiggs' camp, Plan del Rio, about five miles from the battle-ground. The order of the attack was to be on the 18th, but the positions were to be taken on the 17th. The ground had been previously reconnoitered, roads cut, positions selected, and all arrangements made. On the 17th a hill from which many observations had been made by our officers, and upon which a battery was to be placed, was found to be in possession of the enemy, and a severe struggle with severe losses on both sides was necessary to obtain it ; this was carried and the troops rested here for this day. So far nothing had been gained, but the moral effect of driving the enemy inspired our troops. The Cerro Gordo is a high hill, supposed to be impregnable, crowned with five guns and defended by several hundred troops—enough, it was supposed, to hold it against any number that could be brought

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against it. The possession of this hill was indispensable to our success, and after gaining it their whole works must fall. Then there was to be the terrible struggle. The hill was a perfect cone, the summit covering about an acre, the sides covered with thick underbrush, and within range of musketry from the top, the brush cut off and thrown down, making it almost impassable. The taking of this hill was assigned to General Twiggs' division, consisting of the 1st and 4th artillery, rifle regiment, 2d, 3d, and 7th infantry. The volunteers, two brigades, were to attack the batteries on the left and one brigade and a battery on the right. General Worth was to get possession of their rear, cut off their retreat, and if necessary secure the column attacking the hill. The success of the volunteers was thought unimportant, as the fall of the hill would give us command of all their works, but the attack was necessary to prevent the enemy from reinforcing the hill. The attack was made at nine o'clock, our column moving around to the rear, General Twiggs attacking with great fury, and after a struggle of half an hour carried it, losing many valuable lives, but gaining the battle. As our column was moving around, word was brought that reinforcements were wanted, and the head of the column was turned up the hill.

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We arrived just in time to see the enemy run, and the head of the column gave them two broadsides, hastening their flight. We then took our position, the other column following the enemy. As soon as we had gained our position a white flag was sent offering terms of surrender. The General sent word that the terms must be unconditional, that he had them in his grasp, and that fifteen minutes would be allowed them to consider it. They took only five, and surrendered, and were marched back to our camp at Plan del Rio, numbering six thousand, where they gave their parole and were disbanded. Our division encamped on the field, collected the wounded, took them to hospitals, etc. Our wounded were taken from the field as soon as wounded. They sent surgeons immediately to take care of their own, and all vied with each other in rendering assistance. Our loss is four hundred and twenty-five killed, wounded, and missing; many were wounded so slightly as not to require dressing; probably a hundred are now attending to duty. Their loss is variously estimated from six to ten hundred, probably about eight hundred; over two hundred were buried on the hill, and when I was on it, it was covered with the dying and wounded. It was truly a horrible sight, and no description can equal the reality; within a few yards of my

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tent lay seven dead Mexicans, and this was half a mile from the battle-field—killed probably in the pursuit. One of my men brought me a splendid saddle, holsters, etc., worth forty dollars here; another a pony, a very fine one. Santa Anna's carriage, with between twenty and thirty thousand dollars, was captured, which furnished an easy conveyance for our wounded officers. Much private baggage was captured, which was restored when called for. It is unnecessary to say that the volunteers were repulsed in every effort, except the brigade on the right (General Shields), which took a battery. We took forty pieces of cannon, between seven and eight thousand stand of small arms, more ammunition than we have in the country, dispersed and captured their best and only organized army, and may possibly contribute to bring peace; but who cares?—only the poor devils of the army suffer. I am within forty miles of a mountain covered with snow. The peak looks as if you were looking into the skies. I have never suffered more with the cold than I have the last month; but the weather is, I am told, unchangeable—the same in January and in July. All the fruits and vegetables are like the North.

Your affectionate brother,

J. S.



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

TEPEYAHUALCO, MEXICO, May 4, 1847.

My dear sister :

When I wrote you last from this place, a move onward was contemplated in two or three days, but the difficulty of obtaining supplies for such a large number has delayed our movement ; besides, it is understood that no opposition will be made to our entrance into Puebla, a city of sixty thousand inhabitants. When the army left Vera Cruz, General Scott did not intend going farther than Jalapa ; but the signal defeat of the enemy at Cerro Gordo, leaving them no time to rally their troops, persuaded him to follow them with vigor. By doing so the strongest places have been seized by our troops, and all Mexico cannot drive us out of them. The fortress at Perote, with an ordinary garrison of our troops, is impregnable. In my last I endeavored to give you an account of the battle of Cerro Gordo ; this, of course, must have been very imperfect, but what I wrote I believe to be facts, except the number of prisoners. This I had from the Adjutant-General ; but the result will not vary but a few hundred,—say five,—and this discrepancy arose from their escape after they had surrendered. Many interesting anecdotes might be related, but they would have but little interest

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for you. One, however, I will relate. When Colonel Harney was leading the column up that terrible hill, it was reported to him that three thousand Mexicans were attacking his flank and rear. He replied: "Let them attack; we will carry the hill, then their whole force can't budge us a foot." I met a young officer — Lieutenant Bee, 3d Infantry — and, observing his hand bleeding, remarked to him that I was sorry to see him wounded. He said: Yes, he was sorry too; but that, to save himself, he was obliged to kill a soldier. Then, looking at his sword, found it bloody to the hilt. On entering the fort, a soldier ran at him with his bayonet, which he parried, receiving the wound in his hand. The sides of the hill were literally covered with the dead and dying, but such horrible pictures can have no interest for any person. The road from Vera Cruz to Mexico is the only one deserving the name in the country, and this was built by the old Spaniards. Its expense must have been enormous — they say at least a hundred thousand dollars a league, two and five eighths of a mile. It was built by their forcing the Indians to labor. The bridges, etc., are made of the most expensive material, and after the same plans that are studied at West Point, remarkable for their strength and beauty. Since the revolution of 1821 it has

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had but few repairs, but it would be a good road a hundred years from now. The National Bridge is one of the finest pieces of architecture of the kind known. After leaving Vera Cruz, for eight or ten miles the country is low and sandy ; it then grows rolling, fertile, and much more interesting. The second night we reached the National Bridge ; this is over a stream nearly as large as the Housatonic, and the country resembles somewhat that about the Hollow at Cornwall. General Santa Anna has a country house built in modern style, and very expensive ; a guard was placed over it to prevent any one from defacing it. From this place we marched to Plan del Rio ; this is a stream much smaller than the other, but, like it, running through a deep chasm. This is from four to five miles from the battle-field. After passing it, the country is better cultivated, and you see large fields fenced with strong stone walls, people hoeing their corn, picking fruit, large droves of cattle, sheep, etc. As you approach Jalapa, you can almost imagine yourself in a New England city. It has from twelve to fourteen thousand inhabitants, the streets are large and clean, the houses many of them old, but of a most magnificent appearance. A great many foreigners are here. You must recollect that we have been rising ever since we left Vera

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Cruz, and are now toward five thousand feet above the sea. The nights are cool, the days far from being hot, so that it is comfortable marching at midday. If we should not leave here for a week, you will probably hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother,  
J. SEDGWICK.

CONVENT SAN FRANCISCO,  
PUEBLA, MEXICO, May 25, 1847.

My dear father :

We have heard of the capture of our last two couriers, and I had sent a letter by each : one written after our arrival here, the other at Ama-soque, a few miles from this. General Scott has arrived with the whole army. He says he has cut himself loose from the States, and can provide everything he wants for the army here. All he wants is men, men, money, money, and his communications will be very uncertain. I shall, nevertheless, continue to write, hoping some letter luckier than the rest may reach you. After leaving Tepeyahualco, for four days we passed through a very delightful country, well cultivated, the finest water — generally brought from the mountains ; and at distances from

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twenty to thirty miles there are mountains whose tops are covered with snow ; others, at lesser distances, are covered in the morning, but it disappears during the day. And from here I can see, in every direction, banks that never disappear, and some, to appearances, not more than five or ten miles distant. Yet the weather is mild and uniform. A thin summer dress, or our thick coats buttoned up to the chin, and you do not feel the heat or cold. For the first four days nothing happened to disturb us but reports continually coming in of large bodies of troops in front determined to give us a fight. The second day we heard they had fortified a pass called El Pinal, and had mined the road, determined, if obliged to retreat, to blow us up. We arrived within two miles the evening of the third day. The next morning we sent forward an advance, the main body moving soon after, and found their troops had left, but had not completed their mines. This day we went to Amasoque, where it was expected a commission would meet for the surrender of Puebla ; none arrived, and we expect to remain here. One day, at about ten o'clock, news came that Santa Anna, with the Mexican army, was upon us. In ten minutes the troops were under arms, marching out of the town to give them battle. This report proved true. As we

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marched out, Santa Anna had reached the suburbs at the head of from three to four thousand men, all mounted. As my regiment marched out, they were filing along nearly in a parallel direction, and about one thousand yards distant. After leaving the town we halted, and opened upon them with two pieces of artillery, just as they were forming for a charge. After a few rounds (seventy), they broke, and our regiment was ordered to proceed back to meet General Quitman, who was hourly expected with his brigade. We met him about three miles from town, returned, cooked our dinner, ate half of it, and were ordered in pursuit. We marched, however, but three miles, encamped in a corn-field in a cold rain, with no tents, no baggage, no supper, and, as I thought, a fairer prospect for a battle than we had had yet. At midnight a delegation came from the town, offering to surrender it; but it was well understood by us that Santa Anna with his troops was there, and we thought it more than likely would fight us, as the civil authorities had no control over him or his army. The next morning we started before daylight (lay on our arms all night), marching about seven miles. As we approached the town we met the civil functionaries, come to escort us into the city, and it was here that we learned that the troops had all left.

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After going into the heart of the city, and resting for an hour, we were all marched to our quarters, the second artillery occupying the same barrack that the second battalion had just marched out of. And now the first prospect appeared, for a long time, of having a little rest in comfortable quarters ; and it is not so pleasant now as you might suppose, as we have daily reports of troops ready to pounce upon us if caught napping ; but after General Scott's arrival we felt more at our ease. In my next I will say something about the city, of the magnificence of which you can have no conception.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CONVENT SAN FRANCISCO,  
PUEBLA, MEXICO, June 8, 1847.

My dear sister :

My last letter to father, dated 25th of May, will go with this, as I have had no opportunity to send it, and to-morrow a train goes to Vera Cruz. I have more hopes of your getting this, unless it would furnish more satisfaction to the bandits than I trust it will to you. In my letter to father I have given all that I thought might be interesting up to my arrival here ; now I will tell you of some of the sights already



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seen. In the first place, I hope you have seen Mr. Poinsett's or Waddy Thompson's notes on this country, as it would help me very much, or rather make my statements more credible. We arrived here on the 15th, and after displaying our ragged selves to the natives and receiving an occasional shout, from a still more ragged urchin, of "valiente Americanos," who immediately disappeared amid the kicks and blows of two others, we were ordered to our quarters. This was a barrack recently occupied by the second battalion of their troops, a modern building after the style of many of our own. In this we only stayed a day or two, when we were removed to a nunnery not occupied since 1825. This was a very large building attached to a still larger church, or rather the wings of the church, which had never been completed. You can imagine something of its size when I tell you we had two regiments of foot troops and a battery with all their horses quartered in it, and it was only two stories in height. It was probably built not long after Cortez' conquest, and after the style then in vogue in Spain; at least, no labor was spared, and the materials — brick and stone — were close at hand. You know it was the fashion in those days to bring in all persons that they could make use of, keep them as long as



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wanted, and then turn them loose. It was in this way that they were enabled to build all those splendid buildings that are still the admiration of all visitors ; but little money changed hands except to those citizens that came from Spain. Directly in front of this is the Alameda, a principal public work. It is a large square with fine shade-trees, very thick, and on the outer side a carriageway, and walks with several fountains, around which are stone seats where the upper "ten thousand" assemble to smoke their cigarettes, etc.; and at almost any time any number of carriages and horsemen are seen driving around, and previous to our coming the "canaille" were not permitted to enter it. We were removed to this place in order to make room for General Twiggs' troops. This is very much in the same style; we occupy one floor of one wing with our five hundred men, and the lower story is generally occupied for stables. The building stands upon arches in the form of a square, the center of which is a courtyard ; the masonry is generally very rough, floors either brick or stone, and very little woodwork about them, roofs flat and covered with cement. This is very much the style of all the buildings here ; there are few modern ones. The cathedral is perhaps the most splendid building on the continent. All the

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magnificence of Aladdin's cavern or "Arabian Nights'" history does barely equal the reality here. It is said to have cost six millions of dollars, and I should think could not have cost less. Chandeliers weighing hundreds of pounds of pure silver, the railing around the altars the same, pictures in frames of gold, inscriptions in letters there can be no mistake in, and everything in a style of magnificence you have no conception of. When we arrived I have no doubt but there were seventy-five thousand persons looking at us—an anomaly in the history of all war, to see a force of less than five thousand soldiers take possession of a city of nearly one hundred thousand people, and with more wealth than the whole State of Connecticut—by this I mean in gold and silver. It is probable we shall move in the course of a month for the "Halls." There is but little said about peace, but everybody agrees that things look very much like it. The peace party is on the increase. Santa Anna has resigned, and the report is that Almonte is in prison; he has been one of the most hostile of any of their public men, and if this be true it looks encouraging. I am in excellent health, never better, and enjoying all the luxuries that you have at the North, and many that you have not. Ice, ice-creams,—think of that in

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this latitude! — bananas, pineapples, oranges, and many other kinds of fruit I never heard of before I came here. Remember me to all my friends, and I know you will not forget

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CONVENT SAN FRANCISCO,  
PUEBLA, MEXICO, June 16, 1847.

My dear sister :

I wrote you about a week since, but no opportunity has yet occurred for sending it, yet I suppose some means will be found soon. In the last Mexican papers are copious extracts from letters from the States, from all sorts of people, fathers, brothers, wives, sweethearts, etc., having been captured after leaving Vera Cruz. Among them are two from Mrs. Childs, wife of Colonel Childs, who distinguished himself at Cerro Gordo. Information has been received of the landing and advance of General Cadwalader with reinforcements, consisting of portions of the new regiments and recruits, and they will probably join us in the course of a week. Soon after a forward movement will take place (it is supposed), for you must know that all is mystery to those to be engaged, until the moment the

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movement is to take place. You will wonder what this is for ; but it has never been discovered, unless it is to increase the confusion. Secrecy was supposed to be the great element in the success of Napoleon, and he must be imitated by all great-little men. Amongst these I do not mean to include General Scott, for I look upon him as one of the great men of the day, and it would be the greatest misfortune to this army if anything should befall him. From all reports, the enemy intend to make a stand this side of the city of Mexico, and have already collected a large force to oppose us : but the larger it is the more disastrous it will be for them ; for with our well-appointed army, and the enthusiasm existing in it, no force, however large, can, in my opinion, stand against us. Yet I may be mistaken, and the next action may tell a different story. If so, you may hear of our arrival at Vera Cruz sooner than you expect. Nobody talks of peace now. Campaigning here is altogether a different thing from what it is on the Rio Grande. You can scarcely imagine the delightful climate here. I have been told that the thermometer does not change ten degrees in a year. Yet this I hardly believe ; but it is certainly most delicious at this time. No extreme heat, no sudden changes

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that you experience at the North. The sun comes out warm and bright in the morning, and at this season (which is called the rainy one) showers come up in the afternoon, and after they are over you have the same mild temperature as before. The nights are cool, and fine for sleep. It is not unusual in the morning to see the mountains covered with snow within a few miles distance ; although at greater distances, in every direction, they are perpetually covered, at the base of which vegetation is always growing in perfection. General Scott arrived here about the 25th of last month, with his division of the army. Previous to his arrival we had many reports of the designs of the enemy either to attack us or to get between us and cut off the second division. Fortunately for them and for us, they did not attempt it. But on the very day of the General's arrival this report was received and our regiment marched out to meet him, and warn or assist, as the case might be. But it proved a false alarm, and we had the pleasure of doing what the King of France had done before, except we did not have twice ten thousand men "to march up the hill and then march down again." General Scott's arrival quieted everybody ; all felt safe and confident in the discretion and sound judgment of the hero of '13 and '14, and

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in the gallantry of the troops at Cerro Gordo. The cry is now "The Halls! the Halls!"—the Democrats demand it. They will not be satisfied unless their soldiers have one revel in the "Halls of the Montezumas." If this would satisfy them we would be content, in a week we would be there, but with all our hard knocks it does not seem that we are any nearer peace. I forgot to tell you that the Lieutenant Gibson that died at Tampico was a young officer that had joined the regiment but a few months previous, and not my old friend of that name. He, however, has met with an accident that will render him *hors de combat* for some months. It was the accidental discharge of a pistol, the ball passing through the ankle, coming out on the opposite side. It makes it still more severe after having undergone the fatigues of a long march, and so far into the interior as to render it impossible to go back to the States. Besides, it is very different campaigning here from what it is on the Rio Grande. It partakes more of the civilized way of carrying on war. Here the ladies' eyes are almost as fatal as the climate there. One word for them *en passant*: generally speaking, they are not pretty, but have fine figures, beautiful glossy hair, liquid eyes, with very small hands and feet; but with all these beauties,

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there is something about them which you cannot fancy. Their manners are very attractive, more so than our ladies; excessively fond of dress, particularly of jewelry; the dress is much the same style as the ladies of the States, excepting a bonnet is never worn, instead of which they wear a long shawl (called *reboza*) thrown over the head and held under the chin, sometimes thrown back when they have a handsome pair of earrings to display, but that is a weakness many ladies have. Probably my next will be from Mexico; but who knows? Whether here or there, believe me,

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

PUEBLA, MEXICO, July 10, 1847.

My dear father :

Some time yesterday I received your letters of May 5th and 27th, one from Olive, and one from Dr. Gold, and in all of them I am greatly rejoiced to hear of your continued good health. You little know with what anxiety I look for letters, now that I am separated so far from you. Heretofore I have felt that I was at home, or could be there in a few hours; now I have not the satisfaction of knowing that a letter will proba-



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bly reach you. This was one reason for requesting Captain Swartwout to drop you a line to inform you that the siege was over, and with so little loss to our troops. If I had had half an hour, I should have written myself. Captain Swartwout is my Captain, and a very high-minded officer and gentlemen, with whom I have always had the most pleasant intercourse. He left Vera Cruz the day our troops first took possession of the town. I was left at our old encampment till the next day, and on coming to town I learned, somewhat to my surprise, that he had gone. I knew that he had applied and expected to go but did not think of going till the army marched into the interior, as his health was not such as to endure the fatigues of a campaign. As to my punctuality in writing, he ought to know something about it, as I have had two long, interesting letters from him since he left, neither of which have I answered. I think he may well complain, as I am now in his company, and probably shall be during the war. All is conjecture as to the prospect of peace. You probably know that Mr. Trist is now here, ready to enter into negotiations; and the report was last week — and it was generally believed — that some overtures had been made, but they appeared to have died away, although some still believe that negotiations are now going



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on. I wish I could, for one. If such is the case, it is going on very quietly. With yesterday's mail came large reinforcements under Generals Pillow and Cadwalader,—upwards of four thousand men. General Pierce is on the road with twenty-five hundred men; this will make our force upwards of twelve thousand,—enough, if they are all effective; but the casualties that are continually taking place soon reduce an army in the field. There is a good deal of sickness here, but nothing serious,—diseases that are common to a camp continually changing, but seldom proving fatal. The detachments just arrived had several skirmishes on the road, and lost, in all of them, seventy men killed and wounded; many of the wounded are already fit for duty. As I have written you before, the climate here is delightful. We live in sight of perpetual snow, and that in every direction; or, as some more poetical genius said, “The people live in eternal spring, and can throw a cannon ball into regions of perpetual snow.” To-morrow our brigade leaves here to occupy a pass some twenty miles back, said to be now occupied by a few Mexicans who intend to annoy General Pierce. We shall return with him, and, it is thought, a forward movement will soon after be made. If, after our occupying the city, peace does not follow on im-

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mediately, I think the Mexican nation is doomed, but I have no desire to remain here to see that; yet I think it not only for their benefit, but for all nations, that such should be the result. With a climate the most delicious, and a soil the most fruitful, it is so sadly neglected as to barely furnish the common necessities of life. The only luxuries—or what we call comforts—are furnished by foreigners, mostly Frenchmen, and these at such exorbitant prices that few can afford them. The only pride that they appear to take is in their horses and riding. This they bring to perfection; when two ride on the same horse, the usual way is, the lady rides in front on the contrary side from our ladies, the gentleman behind holding the rein in his left hand, his arm supporting the lady. The carriages are generally of American manufacture, but meaner and more clumsy than ours, drawn by two mules, with postillions and servant behind; sometimes five or six mules are used. Their diligences or coaches are drawn by eight,—two on the tongue, then four abreast, then two to lead, with a postillion on the near wheel mule and near leading one. They move regularly between this and Mexico, but not between this place and Vera Cruz, probably because we might make use of them in sending despatches, etc. The roads are now so infested

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with robbers that it is almost impossible to get any one to risk the attempt. Several have been shot in the undertaking. Now the only ones employed are the most notorious robbers, who, as they cannot get as much by carrying the despatches to their own government, prove faithful.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

TACUBAYA,

FIVE MILES FROM THE CITY OF MEXICO,

August 23, 1847.

My dear father:

The news has probably reached you before this will of the great battle that has been fought in front of the gates of Mexico, and that our arms have again by the help of God been triumphant. I will now go back to Puebla and give you a short history of our march and an imperfect idea of the battle. We left Puebla on the 9th instant, and for the first two days nothing particular happened. The country was open and rich and gently ascending. On the third day we reached the top of the mountain that divides the two cities from the valleys that surround them and from which they take their names. Here we found that works had been erected to stop the further progress of our ad-

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vance, but had been abandoned for stronger positions nearer the city, from which they must draw all their supplies. We encamped this night on the top of the mountain, ten thousand five hundred feet above the sea. The air here was so rarified that it was with great difficulty that a person could breathe, and almost every one felt a pressure or pain in the head. From this point we commenced descending rapidly, and after a few hours' march the luxurious valley of Mexico burst upon us, lying nearly five thousand feet below us and at a distance of about twenty miles. You can imagine how rapid the descent was. After reaching the valley we came up with one division that had preceded us by one day—General Twiggs'. There the roads branched, one going direct, which General Twiggs had taken, until he had reached their guns; this was called Peñon Grande and was supposed to be their strongest work. In front of this work he encamped, as if the intention was to force it. Worth's division went to the left to a small town named Chalco. Our division was still behind—could select its position at either place. From the cross-roads Lake Chalco extends to the city, and it was reported and believed that the side we had taken was impracticable for anything but infantry. The

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next day reconnoissances were commanded ; two hundred and fifty men were selected for their endurance, to push on and see how far it could be penetrated. I, with fifty men of our regiment, was of this command. We went fourteen miles and returned the same day. The commanding officer reported the road as practicable, and urged strongly that the whole army should take this route. The next day the whole army was put in motion, 'Twiggs' division was recalled, the others moved up, and ours pushed ahead. The first two days we went only about four miles further than we had been before ; here we met the enemy's advanced guards and obstacles in the road, immense rocks rolled in, ditches dug across, etc. The next day there was skirmishing during the whole day, the hills were lined with irregular troops, and together with driving them and clearing the road for our guns and wagons, we had advanced only a few miles. We stopped at a small town called San Augustin, drove a few troops out, and found that many citizens had retired to this place from Mexico for safety. Santa Anna had been here three days, was concentrating his army and bringing his guns from Peñon Grande to oppose us, but had evidently been disconcerted by our movement. His works had all been erected,

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and everything that could be foreseen prepared, but he had evidently thought that General Scott would force the Peñon. Our troops were now rapidly coming up, engineers were out in all directions reconnoitering, and things were evidently coming to a crisis fast. Everybody was in the highest spirits, perfectly certain of the result: one reason was because General Scott was with us, directing everything. On the morning of the 18th our division marched out and we planted ourselves in front of the batteries of San Antonio. Two or three officers went out to look at a battery, when a ball came, killing Captain Thornton of the dragoons and wounding one man. This was the first gun of the fight, and it cast a gloom over the whole camp. Nothing was done this day, the enemy occasionally firing a shot, but doing no injury. At the same time, other divisions were placing themselves in position to attack other batteries. On the 19th, as General Twiggs was taking his position, a heavy fire was opened upon him from a battery of twenty-two guns. His orders were to storm that battery, whilst a brigade of our division was drawn out to amuse the enemy and prevent them from sending reinforcements. He did not make his arrangements till the next morning, when the attack was made and forced

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in a few minutes, capturing all their guns, taking several hundred prisoners, and killing upwards of five hundred men ; and all this with but little loss on our side — less than fifty men in killed and wounded. Whilst this was going on, our division was comparatively idle, and we had the most alarming reports that we had been defeated, could not carry the work, etc. This was partly confirmed by the enemy rejoicing in front of us : they were cheering, blowing trumpets, and beating drums all night on the 19th. Early on the morning of the 20th (the morning the battery was carried), our brigade was ordered to the support of General Twiggs, but found that we had it all our own way. We were then ordered back to force the batteries of San Antonio. This was done in a few minutes ; their guns were taken and they were driven from all their positions and pursued to a place called San Pablo, where they made their last and desperate stand. Here their works were strong, and their forces, after being joined by those defeated by General Twiggs and our division, amounted to thirty thousand strong. The two divisions met and decided to attack them before their panic was over. This was done, and with such impetuosity that we carried all their works, capturing their guns, ammunition, and dispersing



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their entire army. This was done in a little more than two hours, and with about two thirds of our own force (six thousand men). I have thus given the general result, and have room to add but little more. Our loss has been great — very great. Our regiment lost nearly one third of its number; my company, every sergeant, two corporals, and two privates. Total loss is not yet known, but is supposed to be about eleven hundred in killed and wounded. I thank God that I am yet spared, although I had a narrow escape.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

TACUBAYA, MEXICO, August 28, 1847.

My dear sister :

I have just written father, giving some incidents of the march from Puebla, also the final result of the battle of the 20th instant. We are now at a small town three miles from the same "Halls" that we have all heard so much about, with no obstacle to prevent our entering and having the "Revels" that we have heard equally as much of; but political considerations have decided General Scott not to enter yet. Negotiations are now going on, and it is fervently hoped



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with sincerity on both sides. I do think we have blood enough spilled to satisfy the most avaricious. I have just heard of the death of one of the most promising young officers in the service,—died of wounds received in the action. One of my men also died last night. I lost, during this conflict, my sergeants, two corporals out of three, and eight privates, and nearly one third of my regiment is cut down. It seems a wonderful interposition that we were not all cut down. History does not furnish a parallel when less than ten thousand men (and of those not more than seven thousand) attacked, with the bayonet, an army of about thirty thousand men, strongly entrenched. General Scott says: “I am an idiot to bring artillery so far, and at such an expense, when I have such soldiers.” After the fight was over, I was with others detailed to go for the wounded. In passing over the battle-ground, General Scott and staff rode up. The soldiers welcomed him with shouts and cheers. After they had become silent, so that he could speak, he said, with a good deal of feeling: “I thank Almighty God for this glorious and brilliant victory,—not only for the glory conferred upon our arms, but for the honor of our beloved country; and I thank you, my brave soldiers,” etc. The rest I do not remember, but it was well calculated

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to inspire the soldiers. He has entirely won the affection and confidence of every officer and soldier in this army. You will continually be hearing some one say, "General Scott says so, and it must be right." Among the prisoners are about sixty American deserters,—deserted from Corpus Christi and Matamoras. A court-martial is now in session, trying them. It is possible some of them will be shot,—enough to make an example. Our soldiers are highly exasperated against them, and it was with difficulty they could be restrained from killing them after they had surrendered. Many were killed rather than surrender. Our greatest loss was occasioned by them. They were in a work, and fought with the greatest desperation, knowing that little mercy was due them if taken. None of our officers have yet been in the city, but I understand an opportunity will be given them before long; the people at home expect and demand it, but if it delayed or disturbed negotiations, I would willingly yield my wishes of gratifying my curiosity or to satisfy the people. I think the people, if J. K. Polk represents them, have treated the army most shabbily. It is believed now that the army will soon be on its way home. It is known that commissioners are in session to adjust terms, and it is hoped that they will come to some

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arrangement. Notwithstanding the climate here is delightful, and all the fruits the earth grows are here, yet it is not the States. Many officers here have been absent about two years from their families, and the anxiety they have suffered is beyond calculation. The prospect now brightens for their wishes to be realized. I hope we shall not be disappointed. Since I have written this much, everybody is cheered with the belief that negotiations are going on encouragingly, and all are in high spirits, and would willingly give up the idea of visiting the city if it delayed negotiations one hour. During the action our colors received a twenty-four-pound shot and numerous balls; the bearer fell, and the colors were seized and carried by one of my corporals. As we were about to mount the enemy's work the corporal said: "Lieutenant, shall I shake out the colors and let them see who are after them?" I said: "Yes." But soon after they were in full flight. Our regiment, with the 6th infantry, were the first in pursuit, and followed them nearly to the gates of the city. During the hottest part of the action, General Worth said to the commanding officer of the brigade: "It is reported that your brigade is giving way." One of the staff officers said: "I have just come from them; the 2d artillery are in advance, and driving the enemy be-

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fore them. Not a man has fallen back, though they have lost many men." This was the case with all the regiments; none had gone back. To enable you to understand the organization: General Scott is commander-in-chief; the army is divided into four divisions, each commanded by a Major-General; each division into two or more brigades, commanded by a Brigadier-General. Each brigade is composed of three or four regiments, battery, and squadron of cavalry. I have just seen a list of the captured property. It consists of more guns, small arms, and ammunition than we have in the country. The ordnance officer told me he had destroyed one million of cartridges, and still kept enough to supply us for any campaign. Thirty-seven guns have been captured. We had only sixteen; eight of those did not go into action. Our loss has been severe; it is not yet known how many,—less than was at first supposed: eleven hundred. The enemy's loss in killed, wounded, and missing is reported by them to be over six thousand; over seven hundred have been buried by our troops, and of our own probably not two hundred are dead. Yet this contrast is no consolation to the friends of the gallant men who fell. I was afraid to inquire who was killed and who wounded. I am sure to hear of some very dear

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friends,—some that had passed through all the actions of the war, and have been cut down here. Major Mills from New Haven, Connecticut, but I believe connected with the Kent Mills, was killed; he belonged to the levies. Believe me,

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, September 28, 1847.

My dear Emily :

I have been kindly offered an opportunity of sending a note by an English gentleman who leaves here to-morrow morning for Vera Cruz. I am (thank God) in excellent health, having escaped the perils of the last three great battles that have swept off many of my dearest and most intimate friends. After the battle of the 20th of August an armistice was entered into, and commissioners appointed to arrange the terms of a treaty, and we all indulged the hope that a short time would see us on our way home. But this was of short duration, for there was no sincerity on their part; delay was their object, and they were every day violating the essential terms of the armistice in adding to their defenses and receiving reinforcements. As soon as General Scott ascertained this beyond a doubt, he broke

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off the armistice, and made his arrangements for entering the city. This was on the 6th of September; on the 7th the Mexican army was drawn out between our position and the city in a very strong position, their right resting on Molino del Rey, their left extending about two miles, resting on a large hacienda and a ravine, and all under the fire of a regular fortification of ten guns. General Scott had received false information about this mill being a foundry at which they were daily casting guns, and he supposed that their army was drawn out to cover it, and, determining to get possession of it, made his dispositions for attack on the morning of the 8th, Worth's division to do the fighting, to be supported by General Pillow; the whole number not one half our force. I have no room to write particulars. Suffice it to say that we attacked, broke and drove off the whole Mexican army — believed to be from ten to twelve thousand strong — and all this without the help of our reserve. Our loss was very severe, — greater in proportion than that of the English at Waterloo, — between eight and nine hundred in killed and wounded. Their loss was, in killed, wounded, and missing, between four and five thousand; it is said whole regiments dispersed. We took one thousand prisoners, all their artillery, and great

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quantities of ammunition — do not understand that we took the fort (Chapultepec), as no attack was made on it; that was reserved for another and more glorious day. I have written as if you had received all information about the previous battle, the 20th of August; and no doubt you have seen many accounts in the papers, some tolerably correct, others all lies. Believe not one half you see. On the 11th General Scott, having made all arrangements, determined to bombard the fort the next day, assault it early on the morning of the 13th, carry all their works, and enter the city. This was done exactly as he had arranged and ordered; their works were all stormed and taken, their whole army dispersed, and we bivouacked that night in the suburbs of the city. In the night we threw a few bombs into the city to let them know we were there, but before morning the city capitulated, and we entered the next morning. There was some resistance in the streets from their dispersed soldiers, but nothing of account; the next day all was quiet, and in three days stores were opened as if nothing had happened. Chapultepec was their military school, and one of their best generals, Bravo, commanded, who, with all the cadets, was captured. We are now in the "Halls of the Montezumas," and I hope the good people are



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satisfied with the sacrifice it has cost to come here. We have twenty-five hundred killed and wounded,—three hundred more than General Taylor had at Palo Alto,—amongst them many of the bravest of our officers and best of our soldiers that have been in all the battles. We are now more comfortably situated than we ever have been before since the war commenced, and were it not that we are cut off from the coast and all communications with our friends, would be tolerably happy. Nobody thinks the war over, but all think the hard fighting is. You will not think me vain or egotistic when I tell you that I have been flatteringly noticed by General Worth for my conduct at Molino del Rey and on the 13th, all of which you may see in time. I have written from time to time what I thought might be interesting to you, which I will send on the first opportunity. Believe me to be ever

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, October 1, 1847.

My dear father :

I have just sent a note by the English courier through the kindness of a friend, trusting you



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will receive it, and, if so, that it may relieve you of any anxiety you may have felt for my safety. Believing that accounts and generally exaggerated news will get to the States of such important actions as have recently been fought near this city, I was very anxious till I sent a word to relieve you. In my last letter, written after the action of August 20th, I gave you as true a narration as possible of such events as fell under my own observation and with my own division (Worth's). The next day our division occupied the small town of Tacubaya, about three miles from the city, in consequence of having received propositions from Santa Anna for suspending hostilities to enable them to make some definite treaty of peace. In this it was supposed that they were sincere, for their army was completely routed, and there was nothing to prevent us from entering into the city that night. But General Scott was induced to hold back by representations that it would wound their pride and drive the Government out if he entered it, and thereby delay any chance there was for peace. Their principal fort commanded the town of Tacubaya, and General Scott insisted that it should be placed in his possession. This was refused, and the reason given was that if Santa Anna lost, his power would be

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gone, as it was believed to be already on the decline. To this reasoning General Scott gave in, as he did not wish to lose a shadow of a chance to secure peace. Things remained in this way till the 6th of September, when the armistice was broken off and hostilities commenced. In the meantime commissioners had been appointed and were in daily session with Mr. Trist, and everything appeared to be going on smoothly, and we were all rejoicing that we should soon be on our way home. At the same time, reports were in circulation that they were humbugging us ; that Santa Anna was using every exertion to organize his army, and was strengthening his works. Yet General Scott could not believe in such duplicity. But on the 6th of September he had such undoubted evidence of it, that he notified Santa Anna that in twenty-four hours (the condition in the armistice) hostilities would commence. So well had Santa Anna taken his measures and estimated the time necessary, that on the 7th he drew out his army and took a strong position between us and the city, his right resting on a strong work called Molino del Rey, and under the fire of the work before mentioned, called Chapultepec; and his left, extending more than three miles, rested on a large hacienda, protected by an impassable ravine.

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General Scott had been told that this mill was a foundry from which they were daily turning out guns, and was strengthened in this opinion from the circumstance of their occupying it with all their force. He then deemed the destruction of this mill highly important. He did not wish to bring on a general engagement, as he had not determined on which road he should force his way into the city. He intrusted this duty to General Worth, to be supported if necessary by General Pillow with his division of new levies. General Worth's orders were, as I understand, to drive the enemy from the mill, destroy everything, and retire. The attack was commenced at daylight on the morning of the 8th, by the opening of our large guns, and after a few discharges the order was given to charge. It was now pretty well ascertained that a general engagement had to be fought to get possession of the mill; and to retire without it would give them all the moral effect of a victory, and ours that of a defeat. The battle lasted for more than four hours. The enemy, knowing that only one division of our army was engaged, stood better than they ever had before, but were finally obliged to give way. We succeeded in driving them from every position, for we were not satisfied with the mill after the warm blood was

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up. We captured all their guns, took one thousand prisoners and a great quantity of ammunition. The loss on our side was irreparable: many of our most gallant officers and soldiers fell. I had a very narrow escape: a ball struck me on the shoulder and knocked me down, but did not disable me for a minute. An officer of my regiment, and a classmate, was blown up in the magazine after the fight was over. He had charge of renewing the ammunition, and after taking most of it out he asked permission to blow up the rest, which was granted. He laid the train, but it not going off as soon as he expected, he returned to see the cause, and was blown up with it. After gaining possession of the mill, it was ascertained that there was nothing there of any consequence to the enemy. Some old molds were found that had been formerly used, but the machinery had all been removed to the city. All this time they were pouring a continual fire into us from Chapultepec, but doing little injury, as the fort was much higher than our position. Having accomplished everything, we returned to our position at Tacubaya. Up to this time and subsequently, although lying under the guns of this work, they did not fire a shot at us. Having nearly filled my sheet with this battle, I will

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reserve for another the glorious one of the 13th, the day on which the Stars and Stripes were first hoisted on the "Halls of the Montezumas." I will now relate quite an incident, and a very pleasant one to me. When we first went to Tacubaya, our regiment was quartered near a gentleman's house in which our officers were assigned quarters. We found an old gentleman and his family, who appeared delighted to have us there, and it seemed as if they could not do enough to make us comfortable ; they placed all the best rooms and the richest of furniture at our disposal, and when our wounded were brought in they had all the servants running for them. After the capture of the city our regiment was quartered near a splendid house that was taken for the officers. The family had left it in charge of the servants, with all the furniture, etc. After being here a day or two, we ascertained it belonged to the same gentleman that we had lived with at Tacubaya, and the next day brought his son, who has taken a room and devotes his whole time to making it agreeable for us. All his plate, furniture, and servants are at our disposal. You can have little idea of the extent of a gentleman's house and the number of his servants. Such a house has a large court, the lower floor for stables and servants' rooms, the

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second for the family. In a few they have a third floor for bedrooms, etc. A man of ordinary wealth keeps from six to ten servants; they are paid little or nothing, and they are the best servants in the world. They want a little watching, to be sure. Who will not say that this is the worst slavery in the world? The rich are the richest, and the poor are the poorest.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, October 15, 1847.

My dear father :

I will now give you a short detail of the operations of the 12th and 13th of September, that brought us into the city. From the intercepted letters published soon after the battle of the 20th of August you will perceive the depressed feeling that existed in all classes in the city, and how easy it would have been for General Scott to have marched his army into the city on the 21st; but various considerations determined him to wait, and give time for the Mexican government to reflect, before we took possession of their capital. In my last I gave you the history of the breaking of the armistice, and of the battle of Molino del Rey, fought on

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the 8th of September. After the battle General Scott had not fully decided by which route he should enter the city, either to take Chapultepec, or a road near Churubusco, where the first battle was fought. He sent a brigade to occupy the latter position, and determined to storm the former. On the night of the 11th three batteries (heavy guns) were erected, ready to open early in the morning. I was sent, with fifty men and two small guns, to protect one of these batteries, and was kept there till the attack was made. The batteries kept up an incessant fire all day the 12th, and opened again early on the 13th. The firing was returned from the fort, but no effort was made to take our guns, consequently I had nothing to do. About seven o'clock, the 13th, I was ordered to join my regiment, then about to take a position preparatory to the attack. This position was behind Molino del Rey, and the brigade of which my regiment formed a part was to pursue the enemy as soon as driven from the hill. The fort stands on a hill surrounded by large trees. About eight o'clock two or three regiments deployed and drove in their light troops, the batteries at the same time keeping up a lively fire on the fort, and, as we afterwards found, with great effect. The storming party then pushed



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forward, with scaling-ladders, and in twenty minutes took possession of the hill, capturing all their troops, cannon, and munitions of war. Amongst the prisoners was General Bravo, their most distinguished leader, who commanded them. This was one of the finest sights ever seen, and one of the handsomest exploits of the war. Upwards of two hundred and fifty of the enemy were killed and buried on the hill. Our loss was only twenty-seven killed. We took ten guns and seven hundred and fifty prisoners. As soon as the hill was taken the whole army started in pursuit, except the regiment left in the fort. It was here that Colonel Ransom of the New England regiment was killed. From this place there are two causeways leading to the city. We pursued the enemy so close, and their panic was now so great, that they abandoned their works till we arrived near the gate where they had a strong work, but defended by infantry alone. By this time our men thought themselves invincible, and dashed at them, and in a few moments drove them out with the bayonet. After pursuing about half a mile, we found ourselves within reach of the guns at the gate of the city, and they, opening at the same time, obliged us to take cover while the position could be reconnoitered. After some delay, light troops were put on each



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side to attack the main body gradually approaching by the main road. At about sunset the main charge was made, the guns captured, and the first division was inside the gates of the city. The troops were halted and kept under arms. In the course of the night heavy guns were brought up and opened upon the city, which soon brought out a deputation who said that the Mexican forces were leaving the city, and that no resistance would be made, at the same time wanting to make terms. General Scott told them that he would be at the palace the next morning, and would there dictate terms. Our loss was small till we reached the guns in front of the gate of the city. At this last affair I had command of my regiment, all the seniors (three) having been sent off on detached duty. The other divisions were not so successful; their loss was much greater. This was the last effort made by the army to keep us out of the city. Santa Anna moved his army out three miles to a strong work, Guadalupe, ready to take any advantage that might occur to fall back and try his luck again. On the 14th there was firing from the houses all day, but little injury done, our soldiers scattering them as soon as they could get near them, and by night all was quiet; and

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the next morning some lancers rode into town to endeavor to excite the people, but were soon driven out, and in two days the city was as quiet as if nothing had happened. Santa Anna left the city with about six thousand men, but it is believed that most of them are at this time dispersed. When we left Puebla I had fifty-four men. In all the actions I have lost, in killed and wounded, twenty-seven. I have escaped wonderfully. In the battle of August 20th a ball went through two thicknesses of my india-rubber cloak, and at Molino del Rey a ball struck me on the shoulder, knocking me down; but I looked and saw that my coat was not cut, and concluded that I could not be badly hurt, and as it was a pretty hot place I thought it best to get out of it. I did not feel the effects of the ball again till I got home, when, to make sure, I pulled off my shirt, and found my shoulder black and blue and growing stiff. On the 13th, at the gate, my first sergeant was badly wounded by a grape-shot, close by my side, my drummer killed, and I escaped. It is beyond a doubt that we cannot have much more fighting. The action of August 20th was a severe one, but that of September 8th, at Molino del Rey, in which Worth's

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division, three thousand strong, attacked and drove from their position the whole Mexican army, and that from under the fire of a regular fortified work, has no parallel. In the storming party, out of fourteen officers, eleven were either killed or wounded ; in the regiment of infantry (5th), seven officers were killed out of fourteen ; our regiment lost one officer killed, three wounded—one of the wounded since dead. Two of them were very intimate friends of mine, one a classmate, the other a year before me. The rank and file of the regiment have suffered severely since we entered the valley of Mexico, a great many of our oldest and best soldiers having fallen. But we have accomplished what we were sent here for, and I hope the loss has been sufficiently great to satisfy the most bloodthirsty in the States. We are now enjoying the fruits of our victory, and if we only had the gallant spirits that have fallen, back with us to enjoy them, it would add much to our happiness. Troops are now coming that will enable General Scott to keep open the communication with Vera Cruz. No mail has yet gone. Rumor now says that one is to go soon ; but she has lied so much lately that she cannot be believed. When one does go it will take forty letters that

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I have already written. I hope you will be lucky enough to receive one.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, October 26, 1847.

My dear sister :

General Scott has said this morning that a mail shall start for the United States in a day or two, so at last we have a prospect of again writing to our friends. In this mail I shall send a hundred letters written since the 20th of June, among them a series to our dear father and Emily, giving as correct an account of our march from Puebla, and the different actions fought since the army entered the valley of Mexico, as it was possible for me. I hope none of them will miscarry, as they have cost me a good deal of time in writing them; and, as the events had transpired so recently that they were fresh in my memory, and, as I keep no notes, I should not dare to trust to my after recollections. We are now occupying the capital of the Aztecs, and were it not for the loss of so many near and dear friends,—friends with whom we have enjoyed all the pleasures of a long peace, and with whom we have shoulder to shoulder encountered and van-

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quished the enemy,—I say, were it not for these losses, our situation would be pleasant. The climate is delightful; the army enjoys good health. We have all the amusements of our own cities. As for myself, I have not been in better health for years, nor so good since I have been in this country, although I am not so fleshy as I have been. By this train go all the wounded that are able to go, except those that will recover and be fit for duty in a month or so. I think the people of the States would stare a little if they were all thrown into New Orleans at once—the one-armed, one-legged, one-eyed, and those that have neither. I do not know the number, but suppose it must be from fifteen hundred to two thousand, since we first entered the valley. We have lost near (over, I think) three thousand men, in killed and wounded, out of a force of ten thousand men. I have no way of ascertaining accurately, but think that it is a fair estimate to say about eight hundred killed, four hundred very slightly wounded, that did not go on the surgeon's list; two hundred that were wounded twice, and put down on the report; the others, with perhaps two hundred exceptions, will go down on this train. Reinforcements are daily arriving from the States, and are taking positions on the route to Vera Cruz, so that in a short

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time our communications will be safe and our mail regular. It is now believed by all, both Mexicans and Americans, that no regular organized army can be brought into the field again. This is the center of all their resources, both men and money, also of intriguing ; and as long as it remains in our possession they cannot obtain the means ; besides, we now have most of their cannon, and without them they are nothing but a rabble. It is true that a large number of the bells of the city were taken to mold cannon, and these same cannon are now in our possession. I have written so much military news that I fancy everybody is as fond of hearing it as I have been of writing it. One word more in regard to myself and regiment, which I hope you will not take for vanity. In all the engagements, Contreras excepted, my regiment has played a conspicuous part, and its loss bears evidence that if it was not in the hottest, it was in hot positions. And it is with pride, not vanity, that I boast of having been noticed by every one of my commanding officers. If I could leave the country now I should be satisfied, but I would not have been out of these battles for any consideration ; not that I feel any great desire to see my name in a despatch, but to have returned home without being in any of

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these actions would be like being a lawyer without briefs, or a doctor without patients. We have all the amusements here that you have in New York ; theaters of all kinds. If you do not understand Spanish, you have the French. If you do not like that, you have American. Bull-baits and cock-fighting take the place of horse-racing and cricket in the States. Our soldiers fraternize with the “greasers,” have their balls, and take wonderfully with the señoritas. It is not so with the better classes ; they shun everything like an officer in public, for fear of their own Government, which takes its revenge out of their pockets. It is one of the finest countries, but the worst governed in the world, filled with royal magnificence and the most abject poverty ; in fact, there is no middle class. No artizans ; everything that requires any nicety in workmanship is either imported or made here by foreigners. All of this class of luxuries bring the highest prices, and none but the wealthiest can afford them. The houses of the rich are furnished with more splendor than those of our richest nabobs, while the poor lie huddled together without beds, chairs, tables, and only a few earthen vessels to cook their tortillas in ; and they are the most temperate people in the world, and I have a theory that this is one of the causes

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of their degeneration. If one of them gets drunk you will see him slip off without noise, while if one of our soldiers gets drunk it takes half a dozen sober ones to get him home. It requires something to rouse a man's faculties and his energy. We are the greatest go-ahead people in the world, and we beat the Jews in getting drunk. It is so with the English and Irish. The real Indians, the cross of the Castilian and Indian, are the meanest people living; they have all the cunning, treachery, and the vices of the Indian without any of the virtues of the Spaniard. I think it is the greatest misfortune in the world that Cortez was not annihilated here, and the country would then have fallen into the hands of the Anglo-Saxon. As it is, these people are no better than the aborigines, except in their idolatry, and I doubt if their religion is much better.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, October 26, 1847.

My dear father :

I know that you have felt great anxiety to hear from me since our arrival in the valley, and of the sanguinary conflicts that have been fought here. I sent a note by an English gentleman,



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

who took it to Vera Cruz ; but whether it succeeded in reaching you is doubtful. I also sent another by express, just as we left Puebla, from which I never heard, but think it went safely. The army is enjoying itself as much as could be expected after the loss of so many of its brilliant ornaments. The city is perfectly quiet, and the people do not think us quite such vandals as they were told we were. Occasionally an assassination takes place, but generally through the fault of our soldiers. At night the streets are much more quiet than one of our own cities of half its size, and you will see no persons but soldiers strolling home from the theaters or other places of amusement. The Mexicans have their papers published as usual. Many new ones have sprung up, as Santa Anna shut up all but two, "El Moniteur" and "El Republicano." One of these, whose editor was horsewhipped by an officer for a violent attack upon a young lady for receiving the visits of American officers, complained to General Scott of a violation of the liberty of the press. General Scott told him that the liberty of the press was inviolable only so far as political opinions were entertained, and that if he slandered young ladies he must expect chastisement, as the American officers were as jealous of the honor of ladies as they

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were of their country. Nothing more has been heard of violating the liberty of the press. I do not remember that I have mentioned to you that in the different actions, but mostly at Churubusco, an entire battalion, called the "Sons of St. Patrick," composed of our deserters, were taken prisoners. They have all been tried by court-martial, some eighty hung, and a few shot, and others that deserted before the war were let go. We had some few more that fought gallantly at Molino del Rey desert after the fight was over, so desperate they thought our situation, and things did look bad, for most of our loss was previous to this time, and the strong work of Chapultepec had yet to be taken. The lines around the city were known to be strong, and had to be forced against all the troops they had, and what a city of two hundred thousand could raise animated by a desire to save their capital. I do not think it is known here where Santa Anna has gone, but it is believed he is making his way to some southern port to leave the country; others think that he has gone to Querétaro, the seat of government. He left here for the purpose of cutting off a train that was on its way up. He met General Lane, who was in command somewhere the other side of Puebla, and was signally de-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

feated, losing two of his six guns. Afterward, it is said, his troops had dispersed. General Lane had arrived, without further molestation, at Puebla, from whence he had made an excursion to Atlixco, the capital of Puebla, driven off the few troops there, and brought off all the public property — some three hundred wagon loads. Believe me to be your

Ever affectionate son,

JOHN.

CITY OF MEXICO, November 20, 1847.

My dear father :

At last we have been gratified by the receipts of another mail bringing letters from our friends up to the 1st of August ; but in the mail I only found one, yours of the 8th of July, but it brought the gratifying information that you were all well and enjoying all the blessings so bountifully bestowed upon our favored country. Although I am deprived of many of them, the greatest of which is the intercourse with my dear friends, I still am thankful for the enjoyment of excellent health, for being spared while those above and below have been cut down. Since I last wrote, which letter left here the 1st instant, no move has been made by the army, and none

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

is contemplated till reinforcements arrive in such numbers as will insure the line of operation, and leave a movable force to operate wherever it is needed ; and then rumor says a small force is to be sent to Querétaro, where the Congress is now in session, about one hundred and twenty miles farther in the interior, another to Toluca, the capital of this State, which is about thirty miles distant. With one of these commands I am sure to be, and every move takes me farther and farther from the coast, and diminishes the prospect of a speedy return. We had all indulged the hope of eating our Christmas dinner in the States, but this hope fled when the armistice was broken, and the army had to force its passage into the city. Of the battles fought that led the way to our entrance to the city, I wrote as fully as I was able, and I can add nothing now that could make it more explicit. You will see a thousand accounts pretending to give an accurate history of the proceedings, none of which will probably be correct. General Scott's reports are the only records to be relied on, and even in them inaccuracies may occur. As there are always contending interests, even in so small an army as this, it is hardly possible for the commanding General to do justice to all. We now see the bad effects of not having a sufficient

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

force here in time. Although this army has done all that it was possible to do, or even for one of larger numbers to do, in the way of fighting, yet it carries no moral force with it. We have always had so small a force, wherever we have moved, that the Mexicans have indulged the belief that they could overwhelm us and drive us out of the country. If General Taylor had had ten thousand soldiers at Corpus Christi this war would never have happened ; or if he had had means to follow up his victories of the 8th and 9th he would have brought the Mexicans to terms ; but soldiers were sent him in handfuls, and supplies in less quantities. If General Scott had had means to follow up his success at Cerro Gordo the war would, in all probability, have been at an end ; but he had no transportation, the terms of enlistment of one half his army expired within a month, and then he was obliged to remain, one half of his army at Jalapa, the other at Puebla. The same system was pursued of sending men by handfuls, and the administration blaming General Scott for not moving on the capital. I have the best reason for knowing that if General Scott's judgment had been consulted he would not have moved from Puebla with less than twenty thousand men ; but he was forced to do so by the administration,

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and had to go with little more than half that number. If any disaster had befallen this army, the sins of some persons would have been too heavy to have been borne. Now that it is believed that the fighting is over men are sent out in any numbers. We hear of some eighteen or twenty thousand on the way, but it may turn out like a report published in the "Union," about the time of our leaving Puebla, saying that General Scott had twenty-two thousand men, leaving it to be inferred that he had that number to move on Mexico with; that there was not a sick man; that General Taylor, with his force, was with him; and that it was not necessary to have any garrison at Vera Cruz, Jalapa, Perote, or Puebla. When will such follies cease? It is proverbial that the army are the greatest set of grumblers in the world, and I suppose I am blessed with my share; but I think any reasonable person will admit that there is some justice in this, particularly as we are the persons that have to suffer. I have just had my valise stolen from my room, containing some money, and little trinkets that I valued more, among them a gold pencil that was the gift of a dear friend. With this mail just received came out one of the officers of our regiment who left New York on the 4th of August, and

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

brings the latest news to us, all the chit-chat. It is amusing to see the crowd continually about him asking half a dozen questions at the same time. One officer inquired about the news of his family ; he had not heard that his father died last June. This was Captain Nichols, who died from the effect of a wound received thirty-four years ago on board the *Chesapeake*, the ball never having been extracted. All the reports have reached Washington before this, and you will soon have them published. In them I have been told my name appears several times very handsomely. General Worth, Colonels Galt and Belton, Captains Hoffman and Brooks have all noticed my conduct. If I had any influence at Washington I might expect a brevet, which would be of great use to me at this time, as it would give me the pay, and prevent juniors, who are daily getting their promotion, from ranking me. It is very likely that I shall remain here for months, or possibly go farther into the interior, unless the stand taken by the United States should bring the Dons to reason, of which I see but little hope. General Scott says there is but a small speck of peace on the horizon. His ideas of carrying on the war are, I fancy, not known here ; probably to take possession of the country. General Taylor, I am told, goes

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

for a line, and holding all north. Two months must decide. Mr. Trist will leave here in a few days. I have sent to Vera Cruz for my trunk, expecting to stay here some time.

Your affectionate son,

JOHN.

CITY OF MEXICO, November 28, 1847.

My dear sister :

A train is to leave here to-morrow, Monday the 29th, and I avail myself of it to send all that I have written since the last one left, the first of the month. It is the intention of the General to have communication with the coast at least once a month, and oftener if practicable. It is believed that the safety of the mail to and from Vera Cruz is secured, as the most dangerous passes are now occupied by our troops. You must not suppose, however, that we are to be idle here all winter. If the troops arrive that are reported to be on the route, several expeditions will leave here to take possession of the larger towns within, say, two hundred miles from here. I do not think at this time there is any force that can oppose one of our brigades, or that will attempt it ; their morale is too far gone to make any resistance, even when they have



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such immense numbers in their favor. You will (perhaps) receive with this a theater bill, just to show you how we get up such things here. The company play three times a week, and the beauty of the thing is, everybody goes that does not understand a word of the play. No Mexicans of any standing attend, as our soldiers partly frighten them away. The rich are glad to have our officers visit them at their houses, which they say that they cannot prevent, but if they associate with us in public, ride or walk, there are plenty ready to denounce them to the government, and they will have to pay dearly for it after we are gone; but perhaps they will not be so scrupulous now, if they think that we will keep possession of what we have got, and get what we can. You may be assured that the army generally are not so anxious for this result. They are hardly willing to expatriate themselves, which will be the result if they are obliged to come to this God-forsaken land. If, however, the change is to be, this country will soon fill up, and quite a different race will take the place of these descendants of Cortez, as they call themselves, but which descent has been so rapid that but little similarity can be traced between the cavaliers that followed Cortez and the present mongrel race at this time. By the way, nearly

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the same route that Cortez pursued in coming into the city was taken by us; that is, on the further side from the coast, and the one by which he left is the one we shall probably leave by, if we ever return to the coast. You can still find many images that the Aztecs once worshiped, but as soon as it was known that they were being picked up as relics by some of our people, the market was at once supplied by forming and burning the clay found here, in which the Indians are very expert, and antique-looking figures are soon made. The Indians have a great fancy for this kind of work, and, for a small coin, will swear that it was dug up some ten feet from underground near some favorite place of sacrifice. I believe at a place near Puebla, called Cholula, many of these relics are still found. I had intended to say, on the last page, that if the Anglo-Saxons once get their feet here, not all the Mexican nation can drive them away. The country is too rich, the climate too mild, for them to give it up without an effort; and when was it ever known that they made an effort without succeeding? The weather at this time is as mild as your May; we never want fires, neither are we uncomfortable with thick woolen clothes. These people at all seasons wear thin dresses, but never go out without a cloak — those that can

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

afford it ; others with a blanket wrapped around them. Now that it is thought the fighting is pretty much over, our old officers have commenced fighting among themselves. It is mostly what was done by this and that division in the different battles, each claiming the lion's share of the honor. General Scott has differed with many of his officers upon some points, at first unimportant, but by growth they have now become serious. I am afraid this will have the effect of recalling him, as they will attempt at Washington to twist everything into a political channel. This I should look upon as a serious evil, as in my opinion, no officer in this army of the rank of General has the capacity to supply the place of General Scott. However, I suppose we shall soon have a civil Governor to put the wheel in motion that will find out the democrats and make this an integral part of our beloved Republic. If you write Cousin Bessie, tell her that the young officer she became acquainted with, whom we called the "Corporal," but whose name was Daniels, died of wounds received at the battle of Molino del Rey. I was with him when he died. He had previously made all his arrangements, partaken of the sacrament, and showed every evidence that he was a Christian. He said : " You will write to my friends at Governor's Island.

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Tell them that my only regret is with parting from friends whom I loved so well ; that I bid them adieu, hoping to meet them in another world." Our regiment has lost but few officers in the battles in the valley of Mexico. God knows whose turn it will be next. I pray that He who has preserved me through so many fields of danger will restore me to my friends unscathed.

Yours,  
J. SEDGWICK.

CITY OF MEXICO, December, 1847.

My dear father :

In my last letters I have given you a short narration of the different battles fought here in the valley — that is, so far as my observation went. You have probably long before this had the official reports in the papers, and ten thousand other accounts more graphic than mine, but I doubt if more accurate. Everybody has a different version to suit his own views, some blowing their own trumpets, others that of some favorite upon whose shoulders they are like to rise. General Patterson is bringing reinforcements—some say several thousand men. These are very much needed, and the more the better,

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

but they always dwindle down from one third to one half. It is always safe to calculate that one third who leave the States will never reach here. General Butler is behind with a still greater number. When he reaches here, speculation will begin about a move. Report now says that no move will take place till about February or March. This will give time for the new Congress, which, I believe, meets in January, to decide upon what course they will pursue, if they are for peace. Our Government has at all times shown too great a desire for peace, and has treated these people much too leniently. If contributions had at first been levied upon the country, in my humble opinion peace would have followed, but it may be too late now. If, on the contrary, Congress is determined to carry on the war, the consequences must rest with it. We are certainly in a much better condition now than we ever have been before. Up to this time every battle that we have fought has been looked upon by us as a forlorn hope; in no one has there been a greater equality than three to one. General Worth's division attacked some eighteen hundred or two thousand cavalry with Santa Anna at their head, and dispersed them without any loss on our part; but this is hardly mentioned in the States, as if not worth

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a newspaper paragraph. General Lane has lately had a skirmish, in which he was entirely successful, bringing off the enemies' guns, destroying all their ammunition, other stores, etc. But this is to be expected; their morale is too much gone to make much defense, unless well sheltered behind parapets, and having the advantage of numbers. Santa Anna is one of the greatest men living, say what you will of his defeats. After providing, as he did, for the defense of this city, no one can say that he did not do everything that a man in his situation could do, and if his troops had defended the works with as much ability as he showed in erecting them, we should never have got into the city. It is folly to say that he was bribed—money is no object to him; it is military fame, it is power, that he wants, and I believe that as soon as the wishes of the people are known he will make peace. I had kept a little memorandum of events that had occurred since I arrived in this country, but which was lost in my valise, about the loss of which I wrote you; but I lost that which I valued still more—all my shirts, diploma, commission, and other little things that I valued very much. I have written to West Point to have a copy of my diploma sent to you. My commission I care little for. Hoping this

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

will reach you, and find you all enjoying health  
and other blessings, I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.

TACUBAYA, MEXICO, December 26, 1847.

My dear sister :

You will perceive from this that I have again left the "Halls," and am now quartered at the same little place, near the city, that we occupied after the battles of Contreras and Churubusco and during the armistice; but this is supposed to be only preparatory to a move into the interior, but to what place, or how far, is not known yet. It is thought by many that no move will take place, and that the two Governments are rapidly conceding something that will bring about peace, and no one is more sanguine than General Scott himself. He expresses himself openly that it is his opinion that the troops will all be out of the country by next April. I hope we may not again be deceived, and what object they can have for deceit is hard to tell. Before it was quite visible their object was delay, to put their city in a better state of defense, to rally their troops, and to recover the move which they had lost with the two actions just fought. The old saw



## CORRESPONDENCE OF

says that "drowning men catch at straws," so it is with us ; we seize everything to twist it into something favorable for peace. Since our entrance into the city we have received large reinforcements that make our position perfectly safe, and our communication with Vera Cruz open. Now a small company, say fifty men, can go through with safety ; but we do not get the mails regularly. There have been none since General Patterson arrived on the 3d inst. Another is now on the road, and will probably be here in a few days. My last letter was dated October 28th, from father. Is it not terrible to be deprived of one of our greatest blessings, that of writing to and receiving letters from our friends? When we are near each other we feel it less. This is one of the principal objections I have for going farther into the interior. I cannot expect to hear or send a letter for three or four months. More troops will have to arrive to establish posts on the road to secure the safety of the trains, but the farther we go from here the nearer we shall be to Tampico, and if the road is opened to that place the mail will come from there. This is the only month in the year in which you want an overcoat, and I have felt the want of one severely, so much so that I have sent to Vera Cruz for mine. Ice is making



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

every night, but disappears with one hour's sun. The houses here, you know, have no chimneys, but the way they have been put up by us astonishes the natives. They have no idea of comfort ; they sit all day shivering, with their blankets on, or have a little furnace of charcoal, which is enough to suffocate white people. They never have dinner parties or sociable meetings ; their visits are all made at the theaters or morning calls. At the theater all the upper ten thousand have boxes, for some of which they pay from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars a year ; these they fit up like drawing-rooms and receive all their visitors. If you see a family that desires a call you go to the box, and, standing, repeat some of those complimentary lies that are so common at home ; you then move to another box, and this is kept up till the play is over. It astonishes them not a little to hear and see our soldiers, men that are never still two minutes in the day ; to hear them yell, hang their legs over the seats, call for "Yankee Doodle," "Hail Columbia," "Star-Spangled Banner," and never give up till it is played. If they take a fancy to an actor they applaud him upon all occasions. This the Mexicans cannot understand, but always sit bolt upright, and anything that they like they ap-

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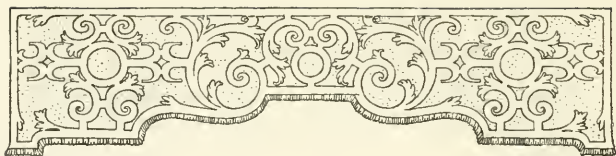
plaud with their feet or cane. But the most common thing here is never seen with us—smoking; but do not imagine that the vile pipe or huge cigar that we have is ever seen here. They use the most fragrant tobacco, rolled up in scented paper, the odor of which is delicious. The theater is better attended on Sunday evening than any other. One officer told me that he lived at a house with several ladies who went to mass every morning as regularly as they got up, and with equal regularity to the theater. They have no such amusements as we have at home; they drive out in the evening to the fashionable drive, and circle around the fountain looking at the equipages, scandalize a little, and go home; in this, however, they differ very little from our own people. Generally the women here, of all classes, are kind, generous, and very much so toward the unfortunate. Our prisoners have always spoken of the kind treatment received from the women and the harsh treatment from the men. The President's message has just arrived, and I believe gives general satisfaction; at all events, much better than the official reports of the battles here have done. Everybody thinks he has done much more than he gets credit for; complains that he was not reported as being first in Chapultepec or some other battery. But this wrangling is con-

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

fined mostly to those who had the least to do, but also, generally, got all the credit. Times have not changed in this respect; at least there is just as much grumbling, just as much boasting now as ever. I believe that Goldsmith says that virtue that always required guarding was not worth the sentinel. It is so with some people's character; if it requires you to blow your own trumpet all the time it is not worth keeping. I sent letters home by the train that left here on the 6th inst.; but, to be sure that you should hear from me, I requested Lieutenant Peck to write father a line, which he promised to do. Lieutenant Gibson also went home; you remember that he was accidentally wounded at Puebla in May last. He wrote me from Vera Cruz that probably he should be a cripple for life. This is a pleasant prospect for a man that is about to be married — provided that the lady should not think it a sufficient cause to break off the engagement. I shall write again before the mail leaves. You are now, I conclude, enjoying all the dis-comforts of sleighing. I hope that long before this you have been fully restored to health and to the enjoyments which health brings. I will bid you all good-by. Wishing all happiness of the coming year.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.



1848

TACUBAYA, MEXICO, January 12, 1848.

My dear father :

I had not intended to write you again by this mail, which leaves to-morrow, but a mail has arrived from home, and brings your letter of November 11th. I had about four weeks previously received one as late as November 3d, which contained an account of dear Emily's sickness ; also her relapse, from which she was then recovering. Since then you may imagine my anxiety to hear again. From day to day we had reports of a mail being on the road, but they did not come ; but to-day, as we came from dinner, we found a table loaded with letters—an unexpected treat. I had only one from home, none from Emily, none from Olive, and none from Philo or Eliza, but I have the consolation

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to believe that there are some somewhere, and that I may get them yet. I received several from the friends of soldiers in my company that have been killed in battles here—one from the brother of Lieutenant Daniels, who was wounded at Molino del Rey and died some time after we entered the city. This I shall answer to-night, and what I can say I don't know. What can be said to console a brother for such a loss? Yet he died (as General Worth said in his report) as all gallant soldiers wish to die. I will here mention a little incident, although a trifle: In this battle two officers from our regiment were detailed for the storming party; these were Lieutenants Shackelford and Daniels. Soon after the stormers advanced, Garland's brigade was ordered up,—my company was the leading one of the brigade,—and when within a few paces of the Mexican lines, I heard some one call me by name, and giving the Second a cheer. I turned, and saw Lieutenant Shackelford a few feet from me leaving the field. This circumstance I could not account for, for I believed that not a man of our regiment would ever have left the field until the victory was gained, and I knew this to be the commencement of the battle. I thought of this for two hours, while balls were falling as thick as they ever fell on a battle-field. It gave me

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great uneasiness, and not till the battle was over did I learn that he was wounded, and was making his way on one leg out of the fire. After going to our quarters we found those two officers lying in bed, wounded. We embraced, and thanked God that so great a battle had been fought and won, and we had all escaped death. It was then that Daniels told me that he was a few feet behind Shackelford; that he saw me; that I was going, as we went side by side at Churubusco, and that he did not think that I could escape the shower of balls that were then pouring down the road where we were. In a few minutes word was brought that one of our officers had been blown up in a magazine. This was the first casualty of the day. In our regiment, in a short month, three out of the five then present had died, and their bodies are now on their way to Governor's Island to be claimed by their friends. This was a cruel and unexpected stroke to us all, who thought their wounds slight. Any of us would have exchanged places with them rather than go through the fight that we knew had to be fought before we could enter the city. There is a great deal of talk about peace; everybody speaks as if it was a certain thing; yet we have been disappointed so often, we may be again. Their Government is so

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

weak, so unstable, that any treaty made with them might not be respected by the party that succeeded the present one. But in this respect our Government has but little the advantage. The eighteen thousand additional troops which have joined since the battles began, turn out to be men in buckram. General Scott has not twelve thousand men here in the valley, and not more than two thousand to join him; and yet it is believed in the States that he has thirty thousand. The movement that I spoke of in another letter is postponed, and it is believed because the last proposition of Mr. Trist has been accepted. General Scott says we shall be afloat in April; a wag says the rainy season is coming on earlier than usual. I have never enjoyed better health. Since I entered the valley I have not lost a tour of duty or a good dinner, though the former came oftener than the latter. You speak in your letter of trying for promotion. I would not accept a Captaincy in a new regiment, as I am so close to one where I am, and am with those I have served with so long. With respect to a brevet, I don't care a fig; they are obtained in such a way that it is no great credit to get one. The staff and the particular friends of the General are all sure to get one, and then if there are any left, others that happen to be in

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Washington get them. I don't care, as I said, a fig about it. If I stay in the army after the war, I prefer remaining in my own regiment. I hope earnestly to see you all in the spring; till then I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,

MEXICO, February 3, 1848.

My dear father:

You will see from the heading of this that I have taken up my quarters in this far-famed castle. I do not remember that I have ever told you that this was formerly the military school (the West Point of Mexico) and, going back still further, the residence of the veritable Montezuma himself. The castle itself stands upon the summit of a ledge of rocks of one hundred and fifty feet in height, on three sides very abrupt—almost perpendicular; on the other the ascent is very gentle, but all rock, the road cut in and winding, avoiding the steeper parts. At the base, and covering several acres, is the forest of cypress, which is said to be centuries old, and from the size of the trees I should think it very probable. One of them is fifty-two feet in circumference,



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

several of them forty, and a great number of them twenty and upward. They are not of great height, but the branches cover a large surface, and are covered with long hanging moss, making it almost impossible for the rain or sun to get through. As you may not be able to swallow all this, I will tell you that I encamped under the largest two nights, and can assure you that I never saw any tree that could compare with it. By leading a horse near it you could plainly see that his length was not equal to the breadth of the tree. This is called "Montezuma's Tree." Another thing which is regarded as one of the greatest curiosities here is "Montezuma's Dial." It is a large circular stone worked in the corner of the cathedral, ten feet in diameter. In the center is a human head with the tongue hanging out, cut in relief, while around this are five circles of hieroglyphic figures, intended for the computation of the different divisions of time. Among the Aztecs the civil year was divided into eighteen months of twenty days each, the year commencing in February, the 26th, I believe. Nobody has yet been found wise enough to read Mexican hieroglyphics. There is also standing in the court of the museum a bronze equestrian statue of Charles IV. This has the reputation of being one of the most

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

beautiful pieces of statuary in the world. I am too poor a judge to give any opinion. They have an institution under the control of the Government something like one of our pawn-brokers' shops. I do not exactly know the workings of it, but it is something like this: A person wishing to pawn anything, no matter what, takes it there, and it is appraised by directors appointed by the Government, and the person receives two thirds of its value in cash. If he returns in a certain time—say a month—and pays what he received, he takes the article. If he should not return in two months, he pays a small interest—two per cent; if in one year, six or seven per cent. At the expiration of a certain time, if the article is not called for, it is sold at auction, and the money goes into the fund. In this way, if honestly conducted, the poor that are temporarily in want, receive the benefit, and the Government likewise receives an income which comes from the spendthrift, etc. I have been told that it is quite a curiosity to go there and see the articles which have been pawned. Everything which can be named—Indian blankets, knives, gold watches, diamond pins, etc. The sale takes place once a month, and it is no unusual thing for the proceeds to amount to several thousand dollars.

I wrote this much last night, and will now

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

conclude. I don't know when a train will leave, but as this is the only method of sending letters, we must wait patiently for it. I hear that there is a mail at Puebla which will be up in a few days; if it comes before I send this I will write again. I never have enjoyed better health than I have since I entered the valley. I have not lost a day's duty, and, with one or two exceptions, have not been out of sorts. I have seen it proved here that our Northern troops stand this climate much better than the Southern. While the New York, Massachusetts, and two Pennsylvania regiments have performed the same services with the South Carolina and other Southern regiments, they have not lost half the number of men. This is in some measure owing to their being a more hardy set of men. It is very hard for wealthy men to sustain the fatigues and hardships of the private soldier. They know nothing about taking care of themselves, or about cooking. They get low-spirited, neglect themselves, become filthy and dirty. More die from these causes than from any disease of the country. I have not lost a soldier, except from his wounds, since we left Puebla, and I take no particular credit to myself, for it is owing to the way they take care of themselves and to their hardy habits. Colonel Duncan was just saying,

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

in looking at the big tree which I have mentioned in this letter, that he was at the Hospital de Jesus, the only building now standing erected by Cortez, and among other curiosities shown him was a table made of cedar cut at this place, and said to be thirteen feet in diameter. He had a rule in his pocket with which he measured it, and found that it was barely seven. This is one of the exaggerations of travelers. I have mentioned, in a former letter, my apprehension of going to San Luis. If a column should move in that direction it is very probable now that this regiment would not go. Peace is all the talk, and there is no doubt but that the treaty has been signed and gone to Washington; but whether the Government here is strong enough to satisfy it and carry it out is doubtful; but if they can hold together long enough for us even to get out of the country, I do not think they will ever want us back.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,

February 28, 1848.

My dear father:

Yesterday we had the pleasure of receiving another mail from the States, and in it I found

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

yours of January 1st, 13th, and 15th. Also one from Dr. Gold, for all of which I am very thankful. No mail has left here for more than a month, and all of our letters for that time have been collecting in the post-office. Rumor says that the mail will leave here day after to-morrow. The first order issued after General Butler assumed the command was that a mail should leave on the 1st and 15th of every month, at each end of the line. This gives great satisfaction to all. General Scott had always sent and received all his letters by the English courier, to the neglect of all the other officers. This has given great dissatisfaction. The road has been open, so that a small escort could easily pass through, and no good reason can be seen why we have not had a mail at least twice a month. General Scott will probably not leave this country for several months. The court before which he is to appear has not yet met, and it is likely will be in session for some time. The difficulty between him and Generals Worth and Pillow appears to have created a greater sensation in the States than here. No one here says or cares anything about it, unless it be their personal friends. As to the merits of the case, I know little, and care still less, about it. I think it was bad policy to relieve General Scott at this time.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

It may have a bad effect upon the treaty. The order reached here the 22d inst., and as we were celebrating the birthday of Washington. The Indians about in the towns flocked in, thinking it was a pronunciamiento by the soldiers in favor of General Scott. They cannot understand how the orders of the President can triumph over the military. When General Worth was arrested they wanted to know if his troops would return to the States or join the Mexicans. It is reported that an armistice has been concluded, the return of which is not known. This, it is supposed, is preparatory to the ratification of the treaty at Washington, and the probability of its being ratified here. Of this there is no certainty; it is doubtful whether the Government is strong enough to carry it through. I believe the Government and the best part of the population are anxious for it, but the military chieftains and the rabble oppose it. The working classes are benefited by the war; the rabble take good care to save themselves when hard blows come. Some one said that we ought to continue the war and whip them until they consented to take back all Texas to the Sabine. It may come to that yet.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC, MEXICO,  
March 16, 1848.

My dear father :

I received your letter of February 2d day before yesterday ; and although I have nothing more to say than I wrote and sent on the 4th inst., yet I have made it a rule to answer all letters the first leisure time I have after receiving them. In that mail I sent letters to Philo, Eliza, Emily, Dr. Gold, two to yourself, and numerous others on public business, and to other friends. I did not write to Olive as I conclude she sees most or all of my letters home. The prospects of peace are every day brightening, and the treaty probably reached Washington about the 1st of March. If accepted, and no unnecessary delay detains it in the Senate, it will be here in the course of two days. I think there will be no doubt about its being ratified by this Government, but whether the Government will be strong enough to sustain itself to carry out its measures is very problematical. I speak now the opinion entertained by those of high rank, and whose information is no doubt correct. If everything turns out as we now anticipate, we shall be able to leave this God-forsaken country in two months. An armistice was entered into



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on the 29th ultimo, the terms of which I sent you by our last mail. I wrote you that I did not wish you to make any effort to obtain reward for any services I may have done here, though, upon reflection, I am not sorry that you wrote to Mr. Niles. Such things are done every day, but I dislike to ask for anything which I have not the right to demand. If Mr. Niles should take any interest in the matter, no doubt he could obtain it, for I feel (without vanity) that I have done as hard duty, and done it as well, as any officer of the line here. The staff officers often receive rewards for services done by their chiefs, and when they have not been under fire at all. I have been in every battle from Vera Cruz here, excepting Contreras, and, not the least, a campaign on the Rio Grande; but it will be of no material benefit if I get my promotion, as I hope to in a few months. The court meets to-day to investigate the difficulty between Generals Scott and Pillow. I believe General Worth's and Colonel Duncan's cases do not come up. It will be a long and tedious trial, probably as long as the Fremont case. Of the merits of the case I know very little, and care still less. Nobody thinks or cares anything about it here, not half as much as they appear to in the States. We look upon it as a private quarrel in which,



## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

as is always the case, both are wrong. General Worth thinks that great injustice has been done him and his division by General Scott, in his last report, by saying that they did not enter the city on the evening of September 13th. Now, it is a well-known fact that the enemy's last battery, Garita San Cosme, was taken before sundown, and that there was nothing to prevent him—General Worth—from marching direct to the main place but the lateness of the day. And it is well known that General Quitman had not, nor ever could have, taken the citadel and another battery that did him so much injury on the 13th. They fell in consequence of General Worth's success. Some two hours after San Cosme had fallen, Santa Anna sent an aid to ascertain if that work could sustain itself. This aid rode into our lines before he was aware of it, and was taken prisoner. As soon as Santa Anna learned this he commenced evacuating the city. So palpable and unpardonable an error as this General Worth could not overlook. He had no objection to General Quitman's marching into the city first. He was satisfied with what he had done, and this was General Quitman's first battle after Monterey, and he was willing that he should have the honor to first plant the flag on the "Halls." The battle of

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Molino del Rey was another question of difference. There is a great responsibility somewhere about fighting three thousand men against fourteen thousand, and then, after complete success, in not giving credit where it is due. After the battle became general other troops were ordered up and, as General Scott says, "interposed between Garland's brigade and the enemy." Now these troops did not arrive till after the battle had been over two hours or more, and we had complete possession of the field. There was no enemy there except the garrison at Chapultepec, and they had but little idea of attacking us, as they believed that we were about to attack them, and it is thought if we had we should have gone into the city on the 9th without much loss; but this has become an old story. General Pillow's difficulty has nothing to do with General Worth or his division. He is a lawyer and a politician, and can probably manage his own case—bad as it is. I am, thank God, enjoying most excellent health. The climate agrees with me, and were it not that I am so far from home, I should be contented to remain two years longer.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,

March 18, 1848.

My dear sister:

I wrote father day before yesterday, and this morning I learned that a mail will leave to-morrow. Just after closing father's letter the English courier arrived from Vera Cruz, bringing the gratifying intelligence of the probability of the ratification of the treaty. A special messenger is expected to-day, bringing more particular and authentic information. He also brought the news of the death of J. Q. Adams. What a glorious death for the "Old Man Eloquent," to die with his armor on, amid the friends and foes with whom he had so often broken a lance, and where he had so often poured forth those burning words that have disturbed the harmony, and at the same time done so much to raise the character of the nation! Who will dare to assume the mantle of the sage, statesman, poet, and still prouder title of the "Old Man Eloquent"? I hope to be out of this country by September; prospects brighten every day. It is believed that the treaty ratified by our Senate is now on its way here, and will be here in a day or two. It is also thought that it will be ratified at once by the Mexican Congress. Their

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Congress is not like ours,—a deliberative body,—but only to do the will of the Government. It is understood that one of the articles requires the American army to leave the country within three months after the ratification, if the yellow fever does not prevent its embarkation at Vera Cruz. General Butler has said that if he could not embark it before the 1st of June, he would keep it in the highlands until after the sickly season is over. In that case we would not be able to move till September. The volunteers, and those regiments enlisted during the war, may be able to go before. General Worth has demanded that his division be the last to leave the city, and the last to embark from Vera Cruz; for this, you may be assured, he will not receive many blessings. But I am forgetting the fable of a certain milk maid with a pail of milk on her head; while making some very pleasant reflections, her foot slipped. There will be a greater disappointment if the treaty is not made now. I have just received a letter from Lieutenant Gibson, an old friend of mine, whom you may have heard me mention. He is now in New York, and is still unable to bear any weight on his foot. He accidentally shot himself last May in Puebla, and what was then thought a slight wound has proved a serious one, which

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

will probably make him a cripple for life. He says: "Before you receive this I shall be married. My intended is not handsome, but good, amiable, and has some money." This is the first case that I have ever heard of that a man did not swear that his sweetheart was the handsomest woman living; the other qualities come in as a matter of course. No very good feeling exists here between the old army and the new levies and the volunteers. The old army (officers) feel that they have had the brunt of the fighting to do, and the least they ought to expect was that no claims should be made by the volunteers. But when letter after letter comes from the States claiming all the credit of every action, and often when there was not a volunteer there, it has drawn a reply which has led to some sharp words. As General Pierce says: "It has astonished every one that the new levies did as well as they have done." This was enough; all ought to be satisfied; but to say that some have even done such hard service, or have stood to the rack in battle, is preposterous. General Pillow said at Cerro Gordo, when his brigade was repulsed: "Oh, that General Scott would send me some regulars, even if it was only one company," and sent an aid requesting it.

Herr Alexander, the celebrated German ma-

## CORRESPONDENCE OF

gician, has been astonishing the natives here for the last two days. They say he is the very *Diablo* himself. He has a fine intellectual face, but his body and legs are very much deformed, which might strengthen people in their opinion of him. But he does perform some wonderful tricks. I dined with him at a gentleman's house here, and the way he could deceive us was astonishing. I did not wonder at the Mexicans thinking him the devil.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,

MEXICO, April 3, 1848.

My dear father:

I have just received your letter of February 23d, giving the most gratifying intelligence of the recovery of Emily. I had been much cheered by your last, but a relapse so often occurs that I had still some apprehension that her recovery might be protracted. I trust by this time she has regained her usual health, for what a blessing is the enjoyment of good health! We do not appreciate it, even when we have it ourselves, if those around us are enjoying it too. It is only when half of those about us, with whom we are

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

associated daily, are prostrated by disease, that we feel grateful that we are excepted from the pains and sufferings of the sick-bed. I have been so far wonderfully spared, having, with but few exceptions, enjoyed most excellent health ever since I have been in the country. Since I left Puebla, in August last, I have not lost a day's duty. I have become, in a great measure, a teetotaller—very seldom drinking anything. I have found that in this climate it is better to drink little and to be sparing in your diet. The doctors of this country say that the pulque is very healthy to drink in moderate quantities. Few of our people are fond of it at first, but soon become accustomed to it. Like all the Anglo-Saxon race, they fall in with, improve, and go ahead of everything they see. The court-martial is now going on here. Nobody appears to take much interest in it, excepting those immediately concerned. I went in one day for a few minutes; did not see more than a dozen persons present. I know but little of the merits of the case, and care still less. General Scott has a mind as gigantic as his body, but he alienates his warmest admirers by some unfortunate remark—some “hasty plate of soup.” He has no tact, is hasty in his disposition, and, I think, rather vindictive in his hatred. In his personal



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quarrel with General Worth he has carried his enmity to the whole division, and has done it an injustice that can never be forgiven. It was rumored that the treaty was received here by the Mexican authorities five days ago, but this is not certain. It is certain that some important despatches were received and forwarded immediately to Guerrero, where the Mexican Congress is now in session. Four letter-writers at Washington had the treaty signed here the 1st of February, and that was within two days of the time, it having been signed here on the 3d. How it was possible for them to have learned this is more than I can tell. The men were ignorant of it till after the treaty had left, and then they only knew of it through the Mexican papers. The same papers now give the rumor that I have mentioned above. I hope it may prove as correct. We are all looking with much anxiety for it, hoping to be in time to pass Vera Cruz before the winter sets in; or, at all events, to go down to Jalapa, where we can have constant intercourse with home. A few weeks more and the rainy season will set in, which will prevent our moving. Everything goes on smoothly; no complaints as yet of the violation of the armistice; and I am encouraged to hope something will come out of it. I correspond regularly with



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Captain Swartout. He is now in Baltimore, but says he is daily expecting orders to come out. I am afraid he will not be able to stand this climate.

The same mail that brought your letter brought one Litchfield paper containing the proceedings of the county convention. I am glad to see that Albert has obtained the nomination. The Whigs stumble on a good thing occasionally. I was afraid at one time that the Whigs might do something at the next election, but they are wearing away. As much as I am disgusted with the Democrats, I am still more so with the Whigs.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC, NEAR MEXICO,  
April 7, 1848.

My dear sister :

I received your very welcome letter of March 3d this morning. I had but a few days previously received one from father, and had answered it (by sending it to the office), when a courier arrived, bringing the intelligence that the treaty had passed, and that another courier would soon be<sup>h</sup> here with an authentic copy. Accordingly, the next day, the 3rd, he arrived,

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and brought us what was about as welcome, news that a mail left with him and would be here in a few hours. This came last night, only four days from Vera Cruz — almost with the speed of Johnson's express. Your letter relieved me of much apprehension that I had felt for some time in consequence of your terrible sickness, although father and Olive both had written that you were slowly recovering; but now that you are able to ride so far, I hope your recovery will be more speedy. I shall not now feel half the anxiety to return to the States that I had previously, for, aside from seeing and knowing that you were all well, I am very well contented to spend the summer here. I may here make a virtue of necessity, for it is out of the question now to leave the country before autumn, provided everything succeeds to our most sanguine expectations. Everything here now looks as favorable as we could wish. A large hospital is ordered to be established at Jalapa, and the sick here are to go on at once next Saturday. The mail leaves on the 9th. Since the armistice large numbers of the Mexicans of the higher classes have returned to the city. Many of them are officers, both civil and military, and it is no unusual thing to see small bodies of

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

troops passing without taking notice of each other—a very different state of things from what there was during the armistice in August last. Then there were continual complaints of its violation; and, although they had an army of fifteen thousand men, none were ever to be seen, and the people had a sort of defiance in their looks, which is seldom seen now. If straws show which way the wind blows, this may be an indication that we may finally leave the country. A large party started last Monday for the volcanic mountain some fifty miles from here. I had half a mind to go with them, but as I heard some doubts expressed about their ever reaching the top, I concluded to postpone my visit. Humboldt says that no one has ever reached the top on the first trial, and Prescott says that some of Cortez's officers went up and descended into the crater in a basket, and collected sulphur, which was used in making powder. This, I think, may well be doubted; as some one said, after relating a big story, "I did not see it, and therefore cannot vouch for its truth." The rainy season is just setting in. For about a week we have daily a gentle shower in the afternoon, and the fields that could not be watered look fresh as ours the last of May. In the valley,

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and near the base of the hills which surround it, it is watered by artificial means from the hills, and therefore produces crops the year around. In the market you will find the same vegetables and the same fruits fresh at all seasons. These frequently are brought a long distance by the Indians on their backs. I see that a Lieutenant W—— is allowing himself to be lionized in Hartford. I took the trouble to inquire about him, and learned from an officer of his regiment that he was sick all of the time he was in the country, and that, so far from being in any of the actions here, he has not even smelled powder since he came into the country. This was his misfortune and not his fault, as it was of some five others of the same regiment that had conscientious or other scruples about fighting; but this they did not find out till too late to save their credit. If you make lions out of such stuff, I think I have capital enough to set myself up. I am afraid, however, that I shall not be able to leave here until there have been too many triumphal tours made. Captain Wessels is here, and I see him frequently. He is a very clever gentleman and a fine officer; there are but few better of his rank in the service. The court-martial is driving its slow length along; it will adjourn in a few days to New Orleans, and

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

from there to Washington. Nobody thinks or cares anything about it here.

Your affectionate brother,

J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC, April 20, 1848.

My dear father:

Last Sunday I received your letter of March 18th, having received some days previously that of Emily from Kent—the one you refer to. Mr. Sevier arrived last Sunday. The Mexican Congress has not yet assembled. It is wanting some sixteen to make a quorum. These have been elected from this state and Puebla, and it is believed will go on immediately, giving them a quorum, and then there can be no excuse for their not acting on the treaty. Mr. Sevier has said that they shall show their hands at once, and declare whether they are for peace or not. If for peace, they shall ratify the treaty at once, and the army shall move toward the coast. But if they are for war, they shall have it to their hearts' content. Everything looks favorable yet, and I can hardly think that anything will happen to change this desirable result. Yet they are a strange people. I was a little surprised to see that Morris, Webster, and Baldwin voted against

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the treaty. Mr. Benton went against it because his son-in-law had recently been found guilty of mutiny, and had been dismissed from the service. The court here adjourns next Friday to the States, stopping a few days at New Orleans to take evidence, and then will proceed to Washington for the final result. So far there is not much direct proof against General Pillow, and I think he must be acquitted by the court; but the sentiment of the army will never acquit him. General Scott always makes some *faux pas* that derogates from his high position, and takes one half the *éclat* from the brilliant military achievements he performs. A court of inquiry has followed every campaign he has conducted, yet he has been wonderfully successful in all except that of Florida. His luck better not be pushed further; the Whigs better let him alone. The mail has arrived, but brought no letters for me. The French revolution is all the topic now. Louis Phillipe, with all his shrewdness, does not appear to have been able to curb the democracy of the French. The English may yet see a model Republic under their very noses, and it may give them much trouble. We shall see some great events there yet.

Your affectionate son,

J. SEDGWICK.

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,

May 3, 1848.

My dear sister:

I had hoped before this that I should have been on my way to Vera Cruz, or could at least have named a day when we were to start; but I cannot. Although the peace prospects are as bright as they ever have been, it may be some weeks before we leave the city. Rumor says now that as soon as the treaty is ratified by the Mexican Government, the whole army is to leave the country immediately, and not wait at Jalapa, as has been heretofore supposed. This, I think, the best way, as we should not lose as many men by passing through Vera Cruz, provided there was no delay, as we should by keeping all the volunteers here during the summer. I don't know where my regiment will be sent after the war—probably somewhere on the coast, and, I hope, in the vicinity of New York. A strong force will be left on the boundary line, but principally infantry, for the safety of our frontier, to prevent any invasion either from Indians or Mexicans. There is much more intercourse between the citizens and the officers than formerly. It is now no difficult thing to approach the best society socially; formerly this was impossible,



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but, I believe, through no fault of the ladies, who have always been disposed to encourage the visits of the officers, but have been prevented by the interference of the men; and this interference has often been from political considerations. What must be the Government who will persecute its citizens for performing the ordinary decorums of life! And yet many of the citizens here will tell you that they are afraid to ask you to dine, for fear of the consequences after the army leaves. In the same way, if a man has a large quantity of flour or corn to sell, he will request that a force be sent to take it, and then charge one third more for it than he can get from his own people. I wrote you some time since that a party had gone to Popocatepetl. The first effort to reach the top failed, the party suffering terribly. Some of them returned to the city, others concluded to wait for more favorable weather. The second party had better success, and reached the top, planting the Stars and Stripes on its very summit, and this without any difficulty, except what they experienced from the cold. The first party failed in consequence of the snows, reaching two thousand feet lower than usual, and the guides can only go as far as the snow, or a short distance into it. They then give the directions that you are to pursue, and



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return to conduct you back. This party, as I said, suffered severely, two or three becoming totally blind, and were so for days, while the blood gushed out of the noses, ears, and eyes of others, their veins swelling so as to burst; and one became so benumbed that it was with great difficulty that his life was saved. He afterward went up with the other party. They represent it as the most magnificent sight in the world. The crater is said, by some travelers, to be from twelve hundred to two thousand feet deep; but these gentlemen did not think it to be more than six hundred. They did not see any sulphur, but saw the smoke, and perceived a sulphurous smell. They think it extremely doubtful whether Cortez could ever have obtained sulphur from there, but of course great changes may have taken place. The cities of Mexico and Puebla, and other smaller places at a distance of one hundred miles, more or less, looked as if they were on the same level as the top of the mountain. In looking down into the valley, it seemed a great distance, and very steep, but in casting your eye from the base of the mountain out, everything appeared to rise, until, as I said, you get to the distance of the city, sixty miles, when everything appeared to be on a level with you. You must remember that I was

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not one of the party, and am therefore relating what was told me by one who was; but I believe that he described things as they appeared to him; besides, all of them could not agree as to distance, etc., which shows that travelers may differ, and yet be sincere in what they write—one in stating that it appeared to be twelve hundred, another that he thought it two thousand feet deep.

Your affectionate brother,  
J. SEDGWICK.

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC,  
May 7, 1848.

My dear father:

I have nothing to write in addition to what I have said to Emily in my letter of the 4th instant, which goes by this mail to-day. We received a mail a few hours after I had finished her letter, but I received no letter from home. The peace news is very flattering. It is understood that a quorum is in attendance, and will act on the treaty without delay. Some of the members have threatened to leave, thereby depriving the Government of the number to transact business; but it is believed that the Government will coerce their attendance, or make such

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

examples of them as will deter others. It is said they can pursue another method: the President can declare that California, and such other States as have not sent delegates, shall be deprived of their representatives, thereby reducing the number so that the present house can go on with business; but it is hoped that they will not be pushed to this resort, but will act promptly. One month will decide whether we are to have peace or to remain in possession of their whole country. For myself, if they do not make peace now, I would never consent to give them another chance, but go to work in earnest and nationalize the whole country. It is our destiny to have it sooner or later, and the sooner the better. I wish you would write to Truman Smith for a copy of the public documents. They contain all the sub-reports of the officers in the valley. You will find them interesting, and I should like to preserve them for reference. They are bound up with the President's messages, and contain all the correspondence, etc. I presume there will be no difficulty in your getting them. I have written you that, some time since, a great robbery was attempted here, in which a murder was committed, and that two or more officers were implicated. It now appears that another officer has been arrested, and, I am sorry to say,

## GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK

one of the old army and a graduate of the military academy. His trial is now going on, and many think that he is guilty, although his friends are confident of his being acquitted. He has always borne a good character, but has been rather fond of money, although he was never a gambler. I have seen no paper since your election, and only know through the New York papers that you have had one. Write me who are the representatives from our town. Albert, I conclude, is elected. Give my love to all, and believe me, as ever,

Your affectionate son,

JOHN SEDGWICK.







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